

THE MYTH OF REPUBLICANISM
IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

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THE MYTH OF REPUBLICANISM IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

by

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Florence, July 2015

INTRODUCTION

The concept of a republic is traditionally connected to the principle that true political freedom consists of not being subject to the arbitrary will of any man or group of men, and it requires equality of civil and political rights. True freedom, Cicero explains, exists only in that republic where the people hold supreme power, which implies an absolute equality of rights, inasmuch as ‘liberty [...] does not consist in slavery to a just master, but in slavery to no master at all.’¹ An individual can define himself free if he does not depend upon the will of another individual in the same way that a state can consider itself free if it does not depend upon the will of another state, and is not forced to accept statutes and laws from others or to request permission for its own actions. Between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the cities of central and northern Italy were governed by republican political systems which only marginally adhered to the Ciceronian concept of *res publica*, understood as ‘that which belongs to the *popolo* (*respublica respopuli*) [...] and which has the observance of the law and the commonality of interests as its foundation.’² During the period of time under consideration in this study, the Italian cities were free and self-governing (*proprio regimine*), they did not recognize any superior

¹ ‘in primisque libertas, quae non in eo est ut iusto utamur dominio, sed in nullo’: Cicero, *La Repubblica*, ed. by Nenci, bk II, chap. 23, p. 396.

² ‘Est igitur [...] respublica/respopuli, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensus et utilitatis communione sociatus’: Cicero, *La Repubblica*, ed. by Nenci, bk I, chap. 25, p. 296. On the Italian *Renaissance*, see Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*; Beck, Skinner, and Viroli, *Machiavelli and Republicanism*; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*; Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent*; Pettit, *Republicanism*; Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*; Viroli, *Le origini del pensiero politico moderno*; Smith, *Civic Ideals*.

power (*civitas quem superiorem non recognoscit*), but nor did they ever guarantee freedom to the entire citizenry. The Italian communes offered a paradigmatic experience of total government in which civic participation was expanded more than in other epochs. But the *unum corpus* which originates from this experience favours individual rights and neglects the abstract protections that theorists of the highly contentious ‘communal democracy’ elaborated upon in the course of the *Duecento* with the goal of avoiding situations of unchecked power.

The harmony of the guild system, about which many late thirteenth-, fourteenth-, and, in some cases, fifteenth-century governments of the *popolo* boasted, reigned without ever succeeding in separating the institutions from personal interests, without ever developing a truly pluralistic culture, and without ever administering justice with impartiality. Montesquieu’s judgment of the Italian republics of his time gives cause for reflection on this subject, as it underlines, in attempting to mythicize English parliamentarianism — which itself is not immune to caste oligarchies —, how even Venice could be considered a form of ‘collective tyranny’.³ It is certainly a partial but intelligent judgement, flawed in its semantics but not in its substance, because the Italian republics of the thirteenth up to the fifteenth centuries never became true republics but were rather crypto-republics or, even better, aristocratic republics. These mixed forms of government, chosen by ‘popular’ volition, as in the case of the civic *signorie*, incorporated the positive aspects of the three main political systems: government by one (monarchy), government by the few (aristocracy), and government by many (popular or democratic government).⁴

This volume will substitute the old conception of an Italy divided in two by the opposition between *comuni* and *signorie* — and of a *signoria* born out of the crisis of the commune — with the image of a pluralistic Italy in constant political fermentation. At the outset of studies on the formation of regional states, John Larner and Philip Jones had already drawn attention to this problem in analyzing the phenomenon of the passage from the civic dimension to the territorial one. Above all, they remained immune to the influences exerted on Italian historiography by the tradition established in the period of the *Risorgimento* with regards to communal and civic supremacy, and they were not receptive to the lure of the Italian Renaissance civic republicanism that was being well received — and would continue to be so in later years — overseas.⁵

³ Montesquieu, *Lo spirito delle leggi*, ed. by Cotta, I, bk XI, chap. 6, p. 277.

⁴ Braccesi and Ascheri, *Politica e cultura nelle repubbliche italiane*, and my review of the volume in *Archivio Storico Italiano*.

⁵ Larner, *The Lords of Romagna*; Jones, ‘Communes and Despots’; Jones, *Economia e società*

The present volume invites scholars to observe Italian republicanism from a different perspective by shifting attention away from the analysis of the various systems of government (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy) toward the vision of the city as an institution because, as contemporary theorists of communes and *signorie* assert, it is always and only the will of the city, independently of the political system, that governs it, which seeks the *bonum commune*. Whether it is a *comune* or a *signoria*, at the centre of the city's governability is found the *civis* for which the system itself becomes nothing other than an interchangeable 'political product' to be utilized according to the circumstances. Tyranny is evidently a completely different form of government not to be equated with the *signoria*, as coeval intellectuals demonstrate. Therefore, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Italian communes became a republican exception within an almost uniformly monarchist (Christian) West, and the personalization and dynasticization of seignorial domains represented a sort of homogenization of central and northern Italy within the larger Euro-Mediterranean framework.⁶

This means that only on certain conditions can the identifiable systems of government in the communal cities of central and northern Italy between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries be counted among the numerous political conceptions included in republican thought. It is difficult to see how these examples fit within the boundaries of Philip Pettit's reasoning on republicanism, which maintains that lack of liberty consists only of the dependence on the arbitrary will of others. It is also difficult to associate them with what is intended by Quentin Skinner when he affirms that the lack of freedom can be caused by either dependence or by interference.⁷ In the same way, when John Pocock correctly interprets republicanism as a 'democratic' doctrine which insists on the participation of citizens in political decisions, he excludes the concept itself from the example set by the Italian cities of the Renaissance.⁸ And the republicanism of Maurizio Viroli can find a moment of passage in communal society only in theory, because the conflicts which transform the popular governments

nell'Italia medievale. The analysis of these topics was received with clarity by William Connell and Andrea Zorzi in the following texts: Connell, 'Repubblicanesimo e Rinascimento'; Connell, 'The Republican Idea'; and on the evolution of the territorial state, see Connell and Zorzi, *Florentine Tuscany*.

⁶ Zorzi, *Tiranni e tirannide nel Trecento italiano*, and Maire Vigueur, *Signorie cittadine nell'Italia comunale*.

⁷ Pettit, *Republicanism*, and Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*.

⁸ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*.

from horizontal to vertical in most of the Italian cities reside in the incapacity of the citizenry to place virtue at the centre of their civic life.⁹

To demonstrate how political abuse is a typical feature of the Italian republics between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we need only to think about the forms of political propaganda which always work in conjunction with the systematic exclusion of the opposition and, not infrequently, with the physical cancellation through torture and the death penalty inflicted upon political enemies. In Florence, as elsewhere, the political enemy became the public enemy whose behaviour was identified and prosecuted as a threat to the entire social body, which is sacred and inviolable as a whole. In the name of God, who was himself put to death, the Italian city-republics legitimized the right to kill and to avenge themselves by leveraging the religion of violence and forgiveness.¹⁰

This is why this book invites scholars to shift the axis of observation and to analyze the late medieval civic republics as places in which the DNA of Western democracies is only theorized. Patrick Boucheron proposes one such shift in perspective by framing the fresco of *Good Government* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338) not so much as the translation of a communal and republican-type political theory but in the context of the concrete urgencies of the years in which the work was commissioned and executed. In 1338, following grave financial and credit crises, the general deterioration of democratic experiences, the advance of competing cities, the passage to a seignorial regime by many communes, and the ever-present risk of internal discord, the city of Siena felt the growing fear of tyranny as a very real possibility. At its core, a good government was not the government of virtues or the government of justice: a good government was that which produces good results, prosperity, and, above all, peace. In commissioning this fresco, the government of Siena denounced its lack of freedom and its incapacity to produce positive effects for the city. That the city could very well turn towards tyranny must have been a real threat if the government wanted to publicly ward it off through condemnation. These doubts confirm how public life was shaken by distress caused by the lack of control over the *regimen civitatis*, and they also demonstrate how the citizenry becomes less interested in the form of government and more concerned with the results that it can guarantee. Can we therefore deduce that the Siennese citizenry of the mid-fourteenth century was prepared to reformulate the aristo-

⁹ Viroli, *Republicanism*, and Viroli, *Libertà politica e virtù civile*.

¹⁰ Ricciardelli, *The Politics of Exclusion in Early Renaissance Florence*.

cratic republican system, of which it is a part into a 'seignorial solution'? The answer is yes, but with the understanding that the government of the city would not move towards tyranny.¹¹

We are therefore beyond the fascinating vision of Nicolai Rubinstein, who reads the republican *Allegory of Good Government* as a sophisticated translation into images of a system of (not only) political virtue that Aristotelian-Thomistic thought made available. Certainly the fresco in the council room of the *Palazzo Pubblico* of Siena, where the government of the Nine representing the city held their meetings, reminded those who sat on the council itself and among the Nine that good government was possible only when the city lived in peace and in accord with the laws of justice for the common good, while it was clear to everyone that a tyrannical power only and always leads to catastrophic results.¹² But it is not only a self-representation of the commune that renders the stigmatizing of tyranny visible and real.¹³ Pierangelo Schiera writes that the peace allegorized in the Siennese fresco by Lorenzetti is not a figure of triumph, but instead the figure has a gloomy look which almost alludes to an obscure ailment of the city,¹⁴ and Andrea Zorzi, citing both this fresco as well as other political and artistic depictions of the 1330s, does not hesitate to speak of a palpable 'anxiety of the republics'.¹⁵

Igor Mineo observes that at the beginning of the fourteenth century the quality of Italian communes varied according to their ability to preserve the *bene commune* (common good), and that it was very difficult to defend the theory according to which the languages of civic virtue and political liberty, elaborated in ancient times (Greek or Roman), were revived in late medieval Italian city-states.¹⁶ Alison Brown agrees on the difficulty of defining not only the meaning of the word 'liberty' in the Renaissance but also its iconic status, whether it functioned as a myth, an ideology, or a realistic depiction of political institutions. She traces the process that undermined belief in liberty in the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries through images as well as words, 'a sequence of appropriation and de-masking that uses not only the

¹¹ Boucheron, *Conjurer la peur*.

¹² Rubinstein, 'Political Ideas in Siennese Art'.

¹³ Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Buon Governo Frescoes'.

¹⁴ Schiera, 'Il Buongoverno "melancolico" di Ambrogio Lorenzetti'.

¹⁵ Zorzi, 'L'angoscia delle repubbliche'.

¹⁶ Mineo, 'Cose in comune e bene comune'. On republicanism, see Mineo, 'La Repubblica come categoria storica'.

familiar language of classical republicanism but also the much less familiar language of the theater and role-playing in Florence'.¹⁷

The great misinterpretation regarding the Italian republics rises from the fact that the contrast between the political openness promoted by the civic communes and the decline identified in the principalities that followed them became an integral part of the Italian national educational curriculum between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The convictions that gave life to the debate on this topic revolve around the idea that the communes represented the maximum expression of the liberty of citizens, that the degeneration of the factional struggles caused their crisis, and that the seignorial regimes marked an end to freedom, thereby opening the way to the foreign invasions of the late fifteenth century. The origin of this narrative lies in the premise that the history of the Italian cities became the theatre of a conflict between two opposing systems of government: communal and 'democratic' on the one side, seignorial and 'tyrannical' on the other.¹⁸

And still another important issue arises from the gratitude that all historians have regarding the theories of Hans Baron and for that numerous and illustrious group of exiles, to which belonged scholars such as Paul Oskar Kristeller and Ernst Kantorowicz, who from Nazi Germany relocated their academic careers to the United States in the years of the Second World War and who theorized the Florentine republicanism of the Renaissance as a model for contemporary democracies in contrast to the ruling and useless Nazi regime. Baron thus elaborates the theory of the birth of civic humanism as a reaction of Florentine intellectuals to the threat represented by the Milanese expansionism of the tyrant Gian Galeazzo Visconti. Once again, however, while being a fascinating theory, it remains unilateral and is at least somewhat forced.¹⁹

In any case, the example of the Italian republics has undeniably represented a fundamental reference point for the values of modern political thought, which has made controversial and sometimes severe judgements in their regard. But even if they were vertically oligarchic and incapable of avoiding an exponential aristocratization of the mercantile classes, the Italian republics were experiments of government that contributed to extending the participation in government and in legislative power to sometimes large segments of the population.

¹⁷ Brown, 'De-masking Renaissance Republicanism', p. 180.

¹⁸ Viroli, 'Le ragioni di un dibattito'.

¹⁹ Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*; on which, see Connell, 'The Republican Idea', pp. 15–19.

This volume is organized in the following way: after Chapter 1, in which the main features of the history of the Italian cities between 1250 and 1450 are outlined, I will discuss the forms of political communication adopted by republics and *signorie* through the study of rhetoric (Chapter 2), of architecture (Chapter 3), of the justice system (Chapter 4), and of foreign policy (Chapter 5) in order to demonstrate how the supposed republicanism of Italian communes and *signorie* was largely a product of precisely orchestrated forms of propaganda: it was, in other words, a myth.

Chapter 1: Power and Institutions from Commune to City-State

Towards the end of the eleventh century in some cities in Italy and in the South of France, there appeared an innovative form of self-government: the commune. Backed by the most important social classes in terms of political, economic, and military power, the commune set itself up as an association of citizens based on the agreement of the participants. From its origins and in its successive development, two opposing tendencies were balanced: the conscience of the citizenry of being a community and the aspirations of the noble families in a struggle for the control of power. The heavily stratified social composition of the Italian cities caused the often violently contrasting interests of different groups and social classes to emerge, and therefore communal society experienced numerous conflicts between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries: the lacerating divisions within the aristocracy caused by the politico-military confrontation between families, clans, and factions; the politico-ideological dispute between the pro-papal Guelphs and the pro-imperial Ghibellines; the conflict between the nobility, mostly identifiable with the dominating class of the first century of communal life, and the *popolo*, that is, the group of representatives of the mercantile, artisan, and professional world (notaries, doctors, apothecaries, judges); the rift between the *popolo grasso*, that is, the class of wealthy businessmen made up of merchants, bankers, and professionals usually belonging to the most important guilds, and the *popolo minuto*, the group of secondary businessmen composed of shopmasters and of retail shopkeepers, organized into minor guilds; and the conflict between these two groups, at times united in coalition, with the vast group of salaried workers (day labourers, servants, shop assistants, manual labourers) devoid of any organization to represent or defend them. The conflicts, as deplorable and destructive as they were, became a dynamic force in the evolution of the Italian communes, whose development can be divided into three

distinct periods: the consular phase (late eleventh to late twelfth century), the *podestà* phase (late twelfth to mid-thirteenth century), and the phase of the *popolo* (mid-thirteenth to the fourteenth century). Neither the government of the *podestà* nor that of the *popolo* — where it was installed — represented a stable and lasting solution, such that the communes experienced ulterior lacerations marked by conspiracies, riots, and revolts. The response to the citizenry's desire for peace and to the need for an executive power capable of ending the perpetual conflict between factions, noble families, and interests organized in the guilds led to a new institutional change. Apart from the particular cases of Venice, Genoa, Florence, Siena, and Lucca, whose governments of the *popolo* gave birth to political experiments in the republican mold, the majority of Italian cities transformed their own communal elective and representative systems into personal regimes centred around individuals who, in many cases by the will of the *popolo*, assumed power, first for a limited period of time, then for life and even as a title of hereditary succession.

Chapter 2: In the Name of the Common Good

Intellectuals of the thirteenth century who wrote about communal self-government assigned the city's powers of government to the *podestà*, asking him to set aside his personal emotions and passions in the carrying out of his duties so that they did not interfere with his obligations or threaten the pursuit of the common good. These obligations began to define themselves in the necessity of acting according to the rule of law in order to guarantee civic order, and they were also defined in the creation of a nexus between the virtue of the rulers and the management of politics, which resulted in the art of good government, the only practice by which civic liberties can be assured. It is, in fact, during the *Trecento* that the Italian cities overcame the categorical barriers which resided in the difference between the republic and the *signoria*, thereby perfecting the concept of 'good government' in the name of the common good. The republican model lay in contrast with the seignorial political model because in republican systems, contrary to what occurs in seignorial models (such as that of Milan), the election of public offices alternated, and although all the candidates belonged to the same lobby, it never suffered the imposition of the inheritance of executive power. The guiding principle of Renaissance republican systems was based on the non-existence of a ruler to serve and on the fact that the citizenry alone was at the centre of the government's interest. If the social composition of republics — such as those of Venice, Genoa, Florence, Siena, and Lucca — was typically

oligarchic, and if only members of the *popolo* enrolled in a guild are eligible for public office, the rise of the *signoria* in Milan, Piacenza, Pavia, Mantua, and Verona demonstrated that the political power of the *signore* was in direct contrast with that of the communal government in terms of the negation of civic liberties while being an inevitable solution to political instability. To the city torn apart by internal dissent and factional struggles, the *signore* became the ruler who brought peace and unity as an illuminated authority capable of restoring the rule of law and the pursuit of the common good. The virtues connected to the world of work were substituted with the praise of the prince and with the moral precepts to which the prince himself must adhere. In both the republics and in the *signorie*, political communication left the concept of common good at the centre of the debate: achieved in the former by the non-proportional distribution of public offices, and in the latter by the ability of the prince to guarantee order, peace, and unity to the *popolo*.

Chapter 3: The Spaces of Power

Beginning in the second half of the *Duecento*, the governments of the Italian cities enacted a series of practices and strategies to manipulate their public image which had as their objective the attainment of political consensus by the elites over their subjects. The urban landscape was remodelled so as to become the image of a shared symbolism and the testimony of a complex history of political and social changes acquired over time. The *civitas* identified the shared spaces within its walls, in which the community symbolically expressed its political, religious, and economic identity. The dominion of the city over the citizens modified the sacred places and the very symbols of urban memory: the geography of the city began to change its face and all of the main places began to be reconsidered. The interest in urban spaces was reinforced, becoming more directed, ambitious, and uncontested. The construction of new buildings was essential, and the renewal of the urban plan of the city responded to the political program aimed at the consolidation of the form of government that carried it out. The architecture became an instrument that more than any other contributed to the establishment of political and social consensus: the greatness of the city was measured by the construction or the enlarging of its architectural symbols, which are expected to be increasingly bigger. The new forms of architecture embellished the civic spaces and contributed to the construction of a common civic identity. Political harmony, a necessary condition for any idea of the state as an organism capable of transforming multiplicity into unity, was

sought through the financing of awe-inspiring public works. Italian cities became theatres in which the constituted order was able to mask social tensions and to propagate an image of greater political harmony than what in reality existed.

Chapter 4: The Sacred Nature of the Social Body

Between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the cities of central and northern Italy pursued their public enemies with exemplary exile, seclusion, banishment, and the death penalty, transforming the enemy itself into a foundational element of the system. The exclusion of 'diversity', threatening the social body of the community that shares the sacred space contained within the city walls — those walls that protect the relics of the saints and the symbols of power through which the community is identified, that defend against enemies, and that guarantee civil and spiritual protection — became a sacred act by changing death and violence into a regenerative element of peace and stability. In a similar manner, public punishment of reprobates, held in significant places of the city or — for the execution of death sentences — outside the city walls, in a sort of 'sacrificial rite' through which the violence that existed in the heart of the community was unleashed on the 'enemy-scapegoat', served to create a shared sentiment and to reinforce the social and political unity of the 'upright' citizens. Beginning with the phase of the commune of the *podestà*, the central theme of communal society became that of social peace and civil concord. Both republics and *signorie* theorized the justice system as being at the centre of the common good, generating social peace and prosperity thanks to concord and to the equal distribution of resources, a social condition that only the good government is able to guarantee. Nevertheless both Republics and *signorie* failed in pursuing that goal, for they only strengthened the position of one political faction, never really pursuing the collective interests of the community.

Chapter 5: The Language of Political Subordination

Between the *Trecento* and the *Quattrocento*, the republics of Florence, Siena, and Lucca transformed themselves from an essentially civic dimension to a territorial domain, adopting a true political and cultural imperialism through which the subjected populations became progressively dissociated from their own communal, cultural roots. The 'salvific' imperialism employed by the Florentine republic invited the subjugated cities to accept Florence as guarantor of peace and stability; that of the Republic of Siena sought legitimacy in the

beauty of Simone Martini's fresco, which portrays the war captain Guidoriccio da Fogliano (c. 1290–1352) in the act of conquering castles in the *contado*; that of the Republic of Lucca proposed itself as *dominatrix*, highlighting its military superiority over the subjected cities which were poorly managed by a feudal system belonging to the past. Even if in different ways, the republics of Florence, Siena, and Lucca utilized sophisticated forms of political persuasion to legitimize their control over the satellite cities and to pursue the consensus of these urban centres with the ultimate goal of exploiting their economic resources. The political and cultural renewal put into practice by the governments of the *popolo* in the middle of the thirteenth century, realized through the formal preservation and the substantial revision of republican political institutions, perfected the new political language of politics in many Italian cities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The three republics of Florence, Siena, and Lucca used as examples in this chapter learned to affirm their own model as 'superior' as they produced a proto-imperialist political language in the realm of foreign policy.

POWER AND INSTITUTIONS FROM THE COMMUNE TO THE TERRITORIAL STATE

The Commune of the Consuls

Between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries, the inhabitants of cities in all of Western Europe organized themselves for self-governance and vowed to help each other to that end. This sworn association, which took the name *comune*, or commune, was represented by the collection of merchants, artisans, nobles, clergy, and professionals who began to designate their own consuls vested with political authority. The most precocious city in this sense was Pisa, thanks to the impulse of its rapid maritime expansion. In 1081, in fact, Pisa obtained official recognition of its maritime rights from the emperor, Henry IV. The earliest known textual evidence of the existence of consuls as representatives is for Pisa, found in a document datable to between 1080 and 1085. This type of oath later became official elsewhere: Biandrate in 1093, Asti in 1095, Milan in 1097, Arezzo in 1098, Genoa in 1099, Pistoia in 1105, Cremona between 1112 and 1116, Lucca in 1115, Bergamo in 1117, Bologna in 1123, Siena in 1125, and other places in the years between 1130 and 1150. From the beginning, the commune displayed its two 'souls': that of the citizens, who had the awareness of constituting a community (a *res publica*), and that of the important families continuously engaged in hegemonic conflict with one another. The commune was born, then, from the provisional compromise between civic components for the necessity of protecting the internal

peace, a compromise at first achieved within the ranks of the ruling class and later between the ruling class and the rest of the population.¹

The history of the Italian commune from its birth in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries can be divided into three distinct phases: the first, from its origins to the Peace of Constance in 1183; the second, from the Peace of Constance to about 1250; the third, after 1250.² During the period in which the government was supported by consuls, the civic communities perfected the techniques of administration, imposed their own sovereignty on the territory, and, of great importance, successfully confronted the pretensions of the Empire, which under Frederick I Barbarossa sought to limit the growing autonomy of the communes by any possible means. Even with their written constitutions guaranteeing the rules of election and self-government, the Italian *comuni* were technically still vassals of the Holy Roman Empire. With what was known as the *Regnum Italicum* — a name generally designating the geographical region of central and northern Italy extending south to, but not including, Rome, which originally belonged to Charlemagne's *Imperium* —, the emperor continued to vigorously impose his demands on northern Italy. The incursions of Frederick Barbarossa in the second half of the twelfth century were legitimized by the Justinian *Codex*, which the first commenters supported at that time: for the juridical scholar Irnerius and his disciples at the University of Bologna, it was incontestable that the *imperator*, in this case, the Holy Roman Emperor, was the only *princeps* and 'ruler of the entire world', for which the *de facto* independence of the Italian cities had to be subject *de iure* to his authority.³ The Peace of Constance of 25 June 1183 brought the long dispute between the Empire and the Italian communes to a close with a very beneficial compromise for the latter: with this act, Barbarossa conceded the right of self-government and the right to maintain a standing army to the cities in exchange for the recognition of imperial sovereignty which, moreover, became increasingly more formal after his death. With the Peace of Constance the civic commune was transformed into a political and administrative entity

¹ Among the numerous available studies on the passage from the *civitas* to the commune, see in particular Tabacco, *Egemonie sociali e strutture del potere*, pp. 397–427; Waley, *Le città-repubblica dell'Italia medievale*, pp. 44–54; Black, *Political Thought in Europe*, pp. 117–29; Jones, *The Italian City-State*, pp. 103–51; Ascheri, *Istituzioni medievali*, pp. 169–294; Occhipinti, *L'Italia dei comuni*, pp. 29–50 and 216–27; Skinner, *Virtù rinascimentali*, pp. 17–52.

² Berengo, *L'Europa delle città*, pp. 171–244.

³ Gilmore, *Argument from Roman Law in Political Thought*, pp. 15–19.

institutionally legitimized and giuridically integrated into the structures of the Kingdom of Italy.⁴

The communal movement took place in all of central and northern Italy, materializing in the formation of sworn associations that committed themselves to protecting the interests of the city's inhabitants against the dominion of the established authorities of the papacy and the Empire. These objectives are summed up in the word *libertas*, that is, in the juridical and political concept which is defined as the characterizing element of any legitimate government.⁵ In the popular conception, such a word as *libertas* signified self-government, and therefore it corresponded with the possibility for the communal institutions to legislate for the benefit of all citizens and for their emancipation from the feudal justice system. Although the Italian communes succeeded in acquiring powers much more vast than in other parts of the Christian world, thanks to the struggle undertaken to obtain them from Frederick Barbarossa, even these powers defined *civitas* in terms of 'freedom of the citizens' or, even better, as can be deduced from *Liber de regimine civitatum* written by John of Viterbo in 1263, as the place in which 'the immunity of the inhabitants is guaranteed'.⁶ Considering that in Roman law *immunitas* meant exemption from public obligations, the concept of liberty as civil freedom, at its height for the entirety of the Renaissance, derives from the constitutional terminology of the Middle Ages as it was considered an exemption from any superior jurisdiction.⁷ The basic element of the commune from which all the successive variations were developed is the assembly, which was indicated with the following terms, depending on the city and the time period: *parlamento*, *consiglio*, *concione*,

⁴ Cf. Artifoni, 'Città e comuni', pp. 368–72. Cf. also Bordone, *La società cittadina del Regno d'Italia*, pp. 101–41.

⁵ Black, *Political Thought in Europe*, pp. 28–33, in particular p. 30.

⁶ 'Civitas autem dicitur civium libertas sive habitantium [im]munitas': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, pp. 215–80 (p. 218). On the *Liber de regimine civitatum*, see Salvemini, 'Il "Liber de regimine civitatum" di Giovanni da Viterbo', now in Salvemini, *La dignità cavalleresca nel comune di Firenze e altri scritti*, pp. 358–70; and for an analysis of the communal government, see Sorbelli, 'I teorici del reggimento comunale'. On the juridical structure of the Italian communes and in particular on the figure of the *podestà*, see Berman, *Law and Revolution*, pp. 386–403.

⁷ Rubinstein, 'Le origini medievali del pensiero repubblicano', p. 3; Rubinstein, 'Florentina Libertas', where Bartolo da Sassoferrato is also quoted: 'civitates [...] quae principem non recognoscunt in dominum [...] earum populus liber est' (p. 274). Cf. Skinner, 'The Vocabulary of Renaissance Republicanism', p. 102.

colloquio, arengo.⁸ Originally composed of all citizens, the assembly was soon reduced to the heads of household; convened by the peal of bells, the blowing of a trumpet, or the voice of the public crier, it met in the town square, in a theatre, in the bishop's palace, or in a church, and its function was to deliberate on important issues such as war, peace, alliances, tributes, and the destination of the commune's assets. Furthermore, it had the power to nominate magistracies and to support individual offices as the seat of deliberative authority.⁹ With the increase of the civic population and the complication of legislating, the assembly was soon replaced by smaller councils elected by various methods. In most cases, there were two types of these councils: the first and more restricted one was called the council of the wise, of the elders, or of faith; while the second and larger one (consisting of up to six hundred people) was known as the major or general council, or even the council of the bell.¹⁰

While the councils held the legislative power, the executive and judiciary powers were entrusted to what can be defined as the government of the commune. In the first phase, the vertex of the government, the supreme magistracy, was that of the consuls, a name that directly recalls the magistrates of ancient Rome. It was a collegial magistrature designed by elections, initially with very brief terms of service (which guaranteed high turnover) and later usually for one year. Cities with a rather high number of consuls meant that there was a certain level of functional specialization,¹¹ such as for the administration of justice, which quickly tended to become separate from the other government activities.¹²

In this first period of the life of the communes, collections of civic laws did not exist in practice, with the exception of the oath (called *breve*) sworn by the consuls at the moment of their entrance in service and of that sworn by the citizens on the same occasion.¹³ The guiding criterion most widely used by the administrations of the consular communes is that of custom,¹⁴ which, however,

⁸ Caravale, *Ordinamenti giuridici*, p. 261.

⁹ On the legislative power of the civic assembly, see Waley, *Le città-repubblica dell'Italia medievale*, pp. 44–86; Occhipinti, *L'Italia dei comuni*, pp. 29–50; Bellomo, *Società e istituzioni in Italia*, pp. 227–33.

¹⁰ On the problem of the relationship between autonomy and sovereignty in the Italian communes, see Fasoli, 'Gouvernants et gouvénés dans les communes italiennes'.

¹¹ Occhipinti, *L'Italia dei comuni*, p. 33.

¹² Cf. Maire Vigueur, 'Gli "iudices" nelle città comunali'.

¹³ Cf., for example, *I brevi dei consoli del comune di Pisa*, ed. by Banti.

¹⁴ On the passage from customs to legal order of the communal cities, see Caravale, *Ordinamenti giuridici*, pp. 243–83; Vallerani, 'La città e le sue istituzioni'; Cortese, *Il diritto*

already beginning in the years immediately after the Peace of Constance, gave way to the statutes, the 'first prefiguration of a territorial set of rules in the modern sense'.¹⁵ The final element of the organization of the commune was formed by the offices nominated by the consuls, such as the *camerarius*, which handled the revenue of the commune, or the *aestimatores* or *allibratores*, which verified patrimony and income. Included in these offices were the notaries, who verbalized the acts of the commune, as well as the aforementioned consuls of justice.¹⁶

The Commune of the Podestà

The consular system proved insufficient in the new phase of development of the commune. Both the contrasts between the different social groups within the city and the battle for political supremacy among the principal families contributed to the crisis of the old system.¹⁷ These conflicts resulted in armed combat between two antagonistic factions, the aristocracy and the *popolo*, both of whose spokesmen's names are identifiable in the documentation of the major communes of the centre-north of Italy since the end of the twelfth century. Beyond the class elements that distinguished the two groups, a simple but efficient definition of the two sides consists of considering the nobility as the group which held and sought to maintain their power, while the *popolo* was the group who sought to take the place of the old ruling class.¹⁸

The solution for getting out of this difficult situation was identified in the creation of the office of the *podestà*, a non-collegial and non-civic magistracy. At least initially, the *podestà*, who came from another city, was chosen as a mediator between the sides and as the person who could guarantee the stability of the city government. Quite soon, however, this magistracy became an instrument manipulated by the party in the power (Guelph or Ghibelline, aristocratic or popular) whose efficiency tended to decrease. The *podestà* was above all the executor of the political directives and decisions that came from the councils of the commune, whose principal responsibility was that of translating the will of

nella storia medievale, II: *Il basso medioevo*, pp. 247–59 and 265–67; Chittolini, 'Poteri urbani e poteri feudali-signorili dell'Italia'; Grossi, *L'ordine giuridico medievale*, pp. 87–108.

¹⁵ Prodi, *Una storia della giustizia*, p. 128.

¹⁶ Waley, *Le città-repubblica dell'Italia medievale*, pp. 48–54; Occhipinti, *L'Italia dei comuni*, pp. 33–36.

¹⁷ Mineo, 'Alle origini dell'Italia di antico regime'.

¹⁸ Tabacco, *Egemonie sociali e strutture del potere*, pp. 316–30.

the civic electoral constituencies into concrete acts. The *podestà* carried out his operational duties within the limits established by various statutes on which he is called to swear at the beginning of his mandate. The *podestà*, therefore, held a principally executive power with room for autonomous initiative that was more pronounced where the local laws were less precise. He was usually a member of a noble family, generally a knight, sometimes a jurist — always, however, with military and judiciary competence whose initially annual mandate would later become biannual.¹⁹

The large number of existing communes in central and northern Italy, the high rate of turnover, and the relatively limited number of illustrious families transformed this position into an actual profession. Moving every year from one city to another, these *podestà* collectively developed an experience which contributed significantly to the diffusion of a homogenous political culture within the communal world. The *podestà* became a professional official, and, because of the necessity of presiding over assemblies and councils, he needed to know how to make wise use of his words and was also required to have experience in the techniques of communication. For this reason, there existed manuals — such as the *Oculus pastoralis*, the writer of which is anonymous, and the *Liber de regimine civitatum* by John of Viterbo, as well as the *De regimine et sapientia potestatis* by Orfino da Lodi — which offered a repertoire of pre-packaged public discourses suitable for various situations.²⁰

In spite of the transformations that signalled the passage from the consular commune to that of the *podestà*, in the era of the establishment and diffusion of the *podestà*, power continued to remain in the hands of the aristocracy who controlled the councils. Called in to mediate as an impartial arbiter, the *podestà* never governed without being controlled by the city's internal factions, which were always attributable to the largest consortium groups present in the city. The *podestà* still maintained, then, the executive power in applying the political directives given by the civic councils. The *popolo*, whose number of merchants and artisans was rising, continued to be excluded from the 'room of buttons'. Its strength became, however, more and more consistent and was founded on

¹⁹ Maire Vigueur, 'L'ufficiale forestiero'; Maire Vigueur, *Cavalieri e cittadini*. On the statutes evaluated as a scholarly resource and as one of the aspects of the phenomenon of the Italian communes, see Sbriccoli, *L'interpretazione dello statuto*; Cristiani, *Statuti e strutture comunali*; Cammarosano, *Italia medievale*, pp. 151–60 and the bibliographical references on pp. 198–200; Chittolini, 'Statuti e autonomie urbane'; Dondarini, 'La libertà di decidere'.

²⁰ Pennington, *The Prince and the Law*, pp. 38–39. On the culture of the *podestà*, see Artifoni, 'I *podestà* professionali e la fondazione retorica'; Artifoni, 'Sull'eloquenza politica nel Duecento italiano'; Artifoni, 'Retorica e organizzazione del linguaggio politico'.

the professional and trade guilds, which were born to protect the interests of the productive classes (the trades),²¹ and on the armed societies, the defence associations which developed in individual districts.²² The conflict between the nobility and the *popolo* was not resolved with the intervention of the *podestà*, but it instead continued to result in bloodshed in many communes of northern and central Italy in the first half of the *Duecento*. The situation became more complicated with the recommencement of the initiative of Emperor Frederick II, who in the second quarter of the century conducted his attack against the papacy and, above all, against the communes. In this way, he favoured the division between Guelph cities and Ghibelline cities, which in turn were internally divided by opposing factions.²³ As a consequence of the rise to power of the *popolo*, the position of *podestà* was limited to the administration of justice.²⁴

The Commune of the Popolo

The claiming of power by the *popolo* was achieved in the constitutions not only of 'adversarial' parties and organizations but also in that of a true 'counter-power', the commune of the *popolo*, which co-existed with the commune of the aristocracy while also fighting against it. This entity of the people had, in fact, its own councils and an executive magistrate, the captain of the *popolo*. In the majority of the communes in central and northern Italy, the commune of the *popolo* established itself during the course of the thirteenth century in relation to the death of Frederick II in 1250, which signalled the beginning of the Ghibelline crisis and of the opening of an *interregnum* that liberated Italian cities from the direct presence of the Germanic king. Florence and Orvieto had their first captain of the *popolo* in 1250, Siena in 1252, Viterbo and Pisa in 1254, Bologna and Perugia in 1255, and Genoa in 1257.²⁵ The cities of central-

²¹ On the artisan guilds in Italy, see Degrassi, *L'economia artigiana nell'Italia medievale*. For the European situation, see Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*, and Balestracci, 'Corporazioni e confraternite'.

²² On the common people and the trades, see Artifoni, 'La società del "popolo" di Asti'; Koenig, *Il 'popolo' dell'Italia del Nord*; Artifoni, 'Corporazioni e società di "popolo"'.

²³ For an overview of the Italian communes during the reign of Frederick II, see Gensini, *Politica e cultura nell'Italia di Federico II*; Cau and Settia, '*Speciales fideles imperii*'.

²⁴ Maire Vigueur, 'L'ufficiale forestiero', p. 77. Cf. the situation in Florence in Zorzi, *L'amministrazione della giustizia penale nella repubblica fiorentina*, pp. 24–31, and Stern, *The Criminal Law System of Medieval and Renaissance Florence*, pp. 74–86.

²⁵ On family ties, see Cammarosano, 'Aspetti delle strutture familiari nelle città dell'Italia

northern Italy at this point had their political foundation in the guilds and increasingly resembled a model of *res publica* understood as the economic well-being of all citizens, by which the consuls of the minor guilds enjoyed the same voting rights as those of the major guilds.²⁶

Even though it is very different from our present concept of political equality, this wide participation in government represents the beginning of political egalitarianism for the ordinary members of the guilds. In Florence, for example, the 'great butcher' Dino Pecora was elected prior, and — in the debates on reforms, laws, and requests in 1292 — the question of *maior equalitas* and autonomy in fiscal matters, justice, and political representation became explicit. In those same years numerous other citizens were included in the administrative structure of the continuously growing government. Within this structure, public officials with a juridical culture, such as *massari* and *nuncii*, proved to be indispensable for the development of widespread sentiment towards active participation for the common good in equal measure as for the much more visible assemblies and councils.²⁷

The process of legitimizing the *popolo* rested its foundation on the theory of the participation of the citizens in managing the common good. This process found its argumentations and its theoretical basis in intellectuals such as Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–57), for whom the emperor was the *dominus mundi* in the same way the autonomous communes, and the governments of the *popolo* which guided them, had their own 'divine' legitimacy,²⁸ and Marsilius of Padua, whose prototype of civic structure based on the *communanza* and on popular sovereignty seemed to have found concrete results in the city of Padua with the Major Council.²⁹ At the time, however, when the captain of

comunale'. On the crisis of magnate lineage, see Dameron, 'Revisiting the Italian Magnates'; Cammarosano, 'Il ricambio e l'evoluzione dei ceti dirigenti'; Pispisa, 'Lotte sociali e concetto di nobiltà a Firenze'. On the fight against the magnates, see also Blanshei, 'Crime and Law Enforcement in Medieval Bologna'; Lansing, *The Florentine Magnates*; Arrighi, *Ordinamenti di giustizia*.

²⁶ Epstein, 'The Rise and Fall of Italian City-States'.

²⁷ Muir, 'Was There Republicanism in Renaissance Republics?', and Eder, 'Who Rules?', p. 183.

²⁸ 'Expedit autem huic populo, qui est in primo gradu magnitudinis, regi per multitudinem: quod vocatur regimen ad populum [...]. Et quod istud regimen sit bonum apparet, quia illo tempore urbs Romana multum augmentata est [...] videtur enim magis regimen Dei quam hominum [...]. Hoc ideo est, quia magis Dei quam hominum regimen est': Bartolo da Sassoferrato, 'Tractatus de regimine civitatis', ed. by Quaglioni, p. 164.

²⁹ Padua, for example, lost its independence in 1328: Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, pp.

the *popolo* and the *podestà* began to exercise a power so strong that it transformed the temporary position into a lifetime appointment, the establishment of the *signoria* was produced. The *signoria*, however, did not attach itself only to the metamorphosis of the *podestà*'s magistracy in an authoritarian sense: it could also have been an expression of the power entrusted to the leader of the victorious faction, or of the establishment of a single person who, introducing himself as *super partes*, proposes himself as capable of resolving contentions and of guaranteeing the stability of government. The *signore* could have even been a foreigner, just as a feudal lord who took over the civic government with a violent attack could have been. However, independently of its origin, the power of the *signoria* was always legitimized by a popular decree or by the communal assembly such that the collective will of the city had a way of expressing itself from a formal point of view. To this popular ordinance was added an ulterior legitimization through the concession of some type of office (usually a 'vicarage') by superior authorities: the emperor in the lands of the Italian kingdom, and the pope in the pontifical territories. These investitures did not formally impede the survival of the republican magistracies, at least for a while.³⁰

In any case, and independently of the political forces that elevated him to power, the *signore* maintained his own prerogatives for life and passed them on to his descendants, tending to give a giuridically unexceptionable dynastic quality to his authority. The *signore* aspired to become a prince and, therefore, to constitute a principality, proposing himself as guarantor of justice and of the peace. The propaganda promoted the *signore* as guarantor of harmony and as capable of furthering the economic development of the state; as the protector of the process of concentrating wealth; as capable of resolving social contrasts and of reconciling the interests of the ruling classes, of the manufacturers, of the entrepreneurs, and, not infrequently, also of the craftsmen and labourers (*popolo minuto*); and as enamoured of his own generosity and power as well as of the chivalric values on which his authority was based.³¹ The profile of the families who were called to be governing authorities — such as the Este of

210–12 and 307–09; Rubinstein, 'Marsilius of Padua and Italian Political Thought of his Time'. On the first half of the fourteenth century as a complex period with regard to political events and relative to the developments of cultural debate, see Maglio, *L'idea costituzionale nel Medioevo*, pp. 157–61. On the common good, see *Il bene comune: forme di governo e gerarchie sociali*.

³⁰ Cf. Chittolini, *La crisi degli ordinamenti comunali e le origini dello stato del Rinascimento*; Law, *The Lords of Renaissance Italy*; Larner, *L'Italia nell'età di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio*, pp. 221–60; Dean, 'The Rise of the Signori'.

³¹ Grubb, 'Diplomacy in the Italian City State'.

Ferrara, the Visconti of Milan, the Gonzaga of Mantua — reveal their membership in the nobility of the *contado* which then moved into the city; several such families came instead from the old, urban class, as the example of the Della Scala (or Scaligeri) of Verona demonstrates, or from the wealthy *bourgeoisie*, such as the Pepoli of Bologna. The prevalence of the noble class, and, particularly, that of rural origin, is also explained by the fact that the forces of the old aristocracy were capable of mobilizing a political and military apparatus which had their foundations in their own territory.³²

While the motives of this transformation towards the *signoria* have not yet been completely understood, there is now a consensus among historians that the very strong internal tension provoked by factional struggles in the thirteenth century was the cause of social contrasts which were growing in inverse proportion to the stability of the public institutions.³³ In the same vein, a second aspect to consider is the incapacity of many communes to organize their territory in a rational and lasting way, and the same can be said for the opposition of the noble and feudal powers that have their base in the territory. Such a change is attributed to the process of aristocratization and of the 'closure' of the ruling classes which, even though at different times, matured with clarity as much in the areas where noble regimes prevailed as in the areas where the forms of communal government were longer lived.³⁴

In the course of the *Trecento* the violence of the factional clashes, which in the previous century had dominated the urban conflicts between rival families with street brawls and the destruction of houses and towers, progressively decreased, and the ruling class became more oriented toward a more moderate and peaceful exercise of power.³⁵ Within the governing class, which was on the whole more limited, the tone and the instruments of political struggle were replaced. The battle occurred by this point within the councils and was also conditioned by the dynastic succession of the noble families in the cities governed by an aristocratic regime. Thus, in most of the cities that went through the experience of the commune, the *signoria* was introduced as a response to the desire for internal peace on the part of the citizenry; for military reinforce-

³² Jones, *The Italian City-State*, pp. 548–64.

³³ Tabacco, *Egemonie sociali e strutture del potere*, pp. 352–63; Martines, *Potere e fantasia*, pp. 81–87; Chittolini, *La formazione dello Stato regionale*, pp. 6–35.

³⁴ Sestan, 'Le origini delle signorie cittadine', pp. 209–10, and Jones, 'Economia e società nell'Italia medievale'.

³⁵ Bossy, *Disputes and Settlements*; Davies and Fouracre, *The Settlement of Disputes*; Shaw, *The Politics of Exile in Renaissance Italy*.

ment; for the concentration of powers, and for the decisional capacity against the perpetual clashing of factions; of the great families; and of the organized interests of the professional guilds. It was the logical evolution of urban life, a response to the problems generated by the very evolution of the commune and to the difficult relationship between the city-centre and its surrounding territory, as well as between one city and another.³⁶

The Rise of the Signoria

The communal government transformed itself, then, into a *signoria* in most cases, and the republican regime became a dynastic and authoritarian one in many cities of central and northern Italy. The phenomenon of the *signoria* appeared principally in northern Italy and in the territories formally under papal rule, such as the Romagna and the Marche regions, where at the beginning of the fourteenth century the communal structures had already been replaced by the power of a single individual, even though they remained formally intact. Thus, in Milan already in 1240, the Guelph Della Torre family prevailed, supported by the popular faction, while in 1277 they were replaced by the Ghibelline Visconti clan. In the same period, after the failed attempt at a *signoria* by Ezzelino da Romano, Verona passed to the Ghibelline Della Scala family, Treviso to the Guelph Da Camino family, and Padua to the Guelph Da Carrara family. The city of Mantua was subject first to the Ghibelline Bonacolsi family, relatives of the Scaligeri, and then to the Guelph Gonzaga family. Ferrara, after a fleeting victory by the Ghibelline Torelli clan, witnessed the triumph in 1240 of the Guelph d'Este nobles, whose ambition was to create a territorial dominion which controlled the estuaries of the Adige and Po rivers. In the Romagna and the Marche regions, the *signoria* proliferated, each at war with the others; the reasons for their development were found in the weakness of papal control: the Malatesta family in Rimini, the Montefeltro family in Urbino, and the da Varano clan in Camerino.

Many of the *signorie* gave a decisive push to the surpassing of the strict territorial limits of the *contado*, which were intrinsic to the very birth of the *comune* and logically tied to a power that has the city as its epicentre. If in the course of the thirteenth century the commune developed a strategy of limited territorial expansion, the example of the *signorie* of the Po Valley in northern Italy demonstrated that these forms of government gave rise to clear manifestations

³⁶ Varanini, 'L'organizzazione del distretto cittadino nell'Italia padana', pp. 195–96.

of territorial reconstitution and of the formation of broader political coalitions that would later also be adopted by the republics of the early Renaissance.³⁷ The *signoria* exploited its bellicose dynamic with expansionistic ends, both because the feudal lands of the *signore* were situated between more than one urban centre that he was interested in controlling and because the ruling classes of some cities were interested in controlling smaller cities and roads of communication. The larger cities absorbed the smaller ones, and the tendency therefore was to create a true 'regional state' according to the principle that it was easier for the individual citizenry to recognize a *signore* as their own leader than recognize the supremacy of another commune.³⁸

The *signore* dominated over the minor urban centres and the larger villages as heir of the authority previously held by the dominant city, and he reunited all the minor centres of the territory who received protection in return through separate agreements. With time, this personal union would transform itself into a more limited merger, and the individual local entities would transfer authority to common institutions and magistrates that would express the will of the *signore*. Above or in place of the old elected magistracies, there would develop an embryonic form of centralized bureaucracy that, in light of future events, would reveal itself to be the first step towards the modern state.³⁹ In other words, the Italian *signoria*, as Max Weber claimed, 'was the first political power in Western Europe which (increasingly) based its regime on a rational administration with appointed officials'.⁴⁰

The Commune in Crisis

Between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, the number of city-states with a republican form of government was decreasing, leaving Venice, Genoa, and the three major Tuscan communes of Florence, Siena, and Lucca. The reason for the different political evolution of the republics with respect to the civic *signorie* is probably to be found in the more com-

³⁷ Chittolini, *Città, comunità e feudi*, pp. 4–5.

³⁸ On the situation in Florence, see Salvadori, 'Florentines and the Communities of the Territorial State', and Pirillo, *Costruzione di un contado*.

³⁹ On the complexity and variety of the Italian world from the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, surveying the mosaic of kingdoms, principalities, *signorie*, and republics, see Gamberini and Lazzarini, *The Italian Renaissance State*.

⁴⁰ Weber, 'The City', ed. by Roth and Wittich, quoted in Kirshner, 'Introduction: The State is "Back In"', p. 1.

plicated social structure of the former, in which the growing importance of mobile capital and of banking and international mercantile interests favoured the rise of powerful oligarchies rather than of dictatorial experiments. In order to defend itself against Henry VII, for example, Florence proclaimed as its lord the king of Naples, Robert of Anjou (1313), who offered to protect the city through his own vicar. Florence later put itself under the *signoria* of Charles of Calabria (1325–27) and of Walter of Brienne (1342–43) in order to attenuate the problems tied to the struggle of internal factions.⁴¹ The only Tuscan city in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that did not put itself under the protection of a *signoria* was Siena. After various short-lived governments which followed the serious and open crisis resulting from the defeat of the Ghibellines at Colle Val d'Elsa, from 1292 the city was ruled by what was known as the government of the Nine, an expression of the mercantile oligarchy that assured the city a substantially stable regime of the *popolo* until 1355. It was only at the end of the fourteenth century, between the years 1399 and 1403, that Siena formally ceded its political leadership to the lord of Milan, Gian Galeazzo Visconti, with the intention of keeping the expansionistic aspirations of Florence in check. The republican tradition of Lucca was contaminated throughout the entire thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth by oppressive *signorie* whose major players included Uguccone della Faggiola (1313–19), Castruccio Castracani degli Antelminelli (1320–28), the Genoese Gherardo Spinola, Giovanni di Boemia, the Rossi family of Parma, the Scaligeri, Florence, Pisa, and, finally, Paolo Guinigi (1400–30).⁴²

Outside of the three Tuscan cities that had the longest-standing republican political systems, there were also periods of political crisis with experiments of urban *signoria*-type regimes. In Pisa, for example, already since the end of the *Duecento* following the experiment of the *signoria* of Ugolino della Gherardesca, the city's government was entrusted to the famous Ghibelline captain Guido da Montefeltro because of a dramatic military situation. After the death of Henry VII, in whom Pisa had placed its hopes, as did the Ghibellines and the exiled Tuscan white Guelphs, Pisa entrusted full power to another great Ghibelline war captain from Montefeltro, Uguccone della Faggiola (1250–c. 1319), who, after having extended his power to also include Lucca, inflicted a terrible defeat on the Florentines in the battle of Montecatini

⁴¹ Chittolini, 'The Italian City State and its Territory', pp. 600–02.

⁴² On the nature of the governments of the Italian political situation during the Renaissance, and on how the oligarchical regimes prevailed over the proto-democratic ones, see Shaw, *Popular Government and Oligarchy in Renaissance Italy*.

(1315). But the following year he was expelled from the city as a tyrant after having placed himself in conflict with some of the families of the mercantile oligarchy. The city then put itself under the *signoria* of the Donoratico family, whose power over the city ended in 1347 with the death of the very young count Ranieri. The same situation occurred in Arezzo, where the communal government was replaced by the civic *signoria* of Guido Tarlati, bishop of the city since 1312 and elected lord for life in 1321. Despite being excommunicated and declared a heretic by Pope John XXI, Guido Tarlati succeeded in extending Arretine territory and in giving a strongly Ghibelline character to his political action. After his death in 1328, political power in the city of San Donato passed to his two brothers, who maintained it for only a few years: thus Arezzo, under pressure from Florence, had to return to the predominant Guelph direction of politics in the region, a direction that came to a close in 1384 when Arezzo was absorbed by Florence.⁴³

In the republican forms of government, the citizens took turns in the governing councils with frequently rotating appointments even though they were often accompanied for varying lengths of time by extraordinary commissions (*balie*) elected in order to resolve problems related to finances, the army, the penal justice system, and public safety. The Italian republics strengthened themselves by utilizing the concept of the equality of citizens and also that of their participation in public affairs, adopting as the elective system the drawing of names by lot following opportune elections (*scrutini*) from a progressively larger pool of candidates. The opportunity for one's name to be put in the bags (*borse*) for the drawing remained, however, a privilege in spite of the fact that the percentage of the citizenry eligible for public office was certainly greater in the republics than in the *signorie*, largely because in those forms of government there was not participation in public affairs by the population as a whole.

Towards the Modern State

Contrary to what happened in Spain, France, and England, where the territorial unification was achieved on a national scale, both the *signorie* that asserted themselves, thereby squashing any form of republicanism, and the Italian communes that did not give in to the will of authoritative *signorie* gave life to regional states, each of which sought to expand itself at the expense of the oth-

⁴³ Zorzi, *Le signorie cittadine in Italia*.

ers without ever achieving national unity because of the particular interests of each individual city. The five most powerful states of the peninsula — that is, the Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Florence, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of Naples — tended to progressively extend their own territory throughout the fifteenth century in an attempt to contain the expansion of the others, thereby promoting a profoundly unstable political landscape. On the contrary, the smaller political entities, such as the Duchies of Rimini, Mantua, and Urbino, as well as the Republics of Siena and Lucca, strenuously defended their political independence, tending to strengthen their own identities rooted in the communal tradition.

The typical example of this tendency is found in the reactions to the Visconti expansionism that, from the last few years of the *Trecento*, appeared to be invincible thanks to the sophisticated forms of political propaganda prudently put into place. The Republic of Venice, pressed by Milan and by Florence, was forced into a difficult resistance that brought about the progressive widening of its regional borders; while the Duchy of Milan, once it overcame the pressure from Venice and Florence, opened the way to the south of Italy, directing itself toward the Angevin dynasty, which was by then far removed from the magnificence of King Robert of Anjou and was moving towards a slow and inexorable decline. The sudden death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti in 1402, however, radically changed the political situation of the peninsula because the political edifice the duke had created began to crumble within a few months, founded as it was on his personal charisma. The Milanese duchy, therefore, though it remained one of the major regional powers of Italy, had to share its supremacy with Venice, Florence, and Naples, the three regional states that more than the others were able to exercise their power on the peninsula. Physically cutting Italy in two was Rome, whose power had ambiguous connotations because its regional power was accompanied by a spiritual power that projected the city and all of its territory into a universally supranational perspective over all of the Christian West.

Around these principal centres of power that were locked in a struggle of relative reciprocal balance, in time there also arose smaller centres, in some cases stable and important, such as the Duchy of Ferrara. With the gradual wearing down of the vain expansionistic desires of the Visconti, the political geography of Italy acquired an element of apparent equilibrium that would characterize the peninsula until the invasion of the French sovereign Charles VIII in 1494. There were certainly aftershocks in the relationships between individual states, produced both before and after the Peace of Lodi in 1454: the humiliating flight from Rome by Pope Eugene IV in 1434 following a revolt fuelled by sev-

eral noble Capitoline families and by the Visconti; and in 1478 the unsuccessful attempt, headed by the Pazzi family and backed by the pope and the king of Naples, to overthrow the Medici *signoria* in Florence, are only two well-known episodes of the enduring and irremediable Italian instability onto which would liberally take root the voracity of the great European powers beginning in the following century.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ricciardelli, 'La città comunale italiana'.

IN THE NAME OF THE COMMON GOOD: *LIBERTAS* – THE LEGITIMIZATION OF THE CITY REPUBLICS

John of Salisbury (c. 1115–80) maintains in his *Policraticus* (1159) that all rulers constitute a sort of earthly image of divine grandeur, thereby anticipating that which the intellectual authorities of the communal age would later affirm and leave as a legacy to the humanists of the fifteenth century. According to the English philosopher and political thinker, it is always the rule to have supremacy over single individuals, and the pre-eminence of the law is always aimed at the common good: addressing the ruler and the man of the court, John thus finds inspiration in the works of Sallust and Cicero and underlines, anticipating the grandiose utopia of peace that the communal cities and then the Renaissance republics will make their own, that every political system is ‘a kind of image on earth of divine majesty’ and that all rulers not only stand upon the law but ‘can be said to partake in large measure of divine virtue themselves’.¹ John thus prefigures that which will become one of the basic concepts of the modern state, forcefully putting the idea of the equality of all citizens in the eyes of the law at the centre of what will become the republican political vocabulary, an equality visible only in that society in which freedom of thought is guaranteed with the goal of assuring the expression of truth. Thanks to the contribution of John of Salisbury’s works, the perfect system for communal

¹ ‘In terris quaedam divinae maiestatis imago [...] magnum quid divinae virtutis declaratur inesse principibus’: John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. by Webb, I, 236.

society becomes the republican system, the political identity of which never disregards the interests of the citizens and never subordinates the interests of the majority to those of the few by its very nature. Thus begins the process of proposing a conception of political liberty not only equivalent to the enjoyment of particular privileges granted by high powers but absolutely bound to civic independence. Only in the elective systems, asserts John of Salisbury, can individuals hope to lead a free existence, liberated from any form of unjust dependency or servitude. For this reason, recalling the terminology of Cicero, such regimes are by their very nature 'free governments', common instruments that guarantee every citizen the possibility to live in freedom according to a conception of *libertas* that will be at the foundation of the political identity of the Italian communes and will remain at the centre of discussion for all of the Renaissance.²

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, the historian Otto of Freising, who travelled in Italy between 1156 and the year of his death in 1158, underlines how in the administration of cities and in the carrying out of public affairs (*rei publicae*) the Italian republics imitated the wisdom of the ancient Romans, and how their love of liberty was such that they 'were governed by Consuls and not by Emperors'.³ The independence of the communes of central and northern Italy, even if fragile and precarious, proved to be evident to the eyes of foreign travelers like Benjamin of Tudela, according to whom the citizens there were 'strong men' exactly because 'they put at the head of their communities senators instead of kings and princes'.⁴ Right from the first communal age, then, the political culture of the Italian civic republics was associated with the theme of freedom, a central political virtue above all at the time when the cities passed from the rule of the consuls to that of the *podestà*. The new official had judiciary, military, and administrative powers as well as those of representation in foreign policy, and he complied with civic statutes at the end of his term in responding to the council of mayors (*sindicatus*), an office appointed to evaluate his incorruptability. For the theorists of communal government, the *podestà* became the instrument through which the necessary 'greatness' could be reached in order to arrive at the freedom of the kind that was read in a model speech written by Guido Faba (c. 1190–c. 1243), who in his *Parlamenta et epistole*, presumably written between 1242 and 1243, suggests to the *podestà* (from Siena, according

² Witt, *Sulle tracce degli antichi*, pp. 299–346.

³ Ottonis Frisingensis, *Gesta Friderici I Imperatoris*, ed. by Waitz and de Simson, p. 116.

⁴ 'Viri fortes [because] nec regi nec principi [...], sed senatoribus quos sibi praeficiunt': Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerarium Benjaminis*, p. 16.

to Augusto Gaudenzi⁵) to promise to follow the good of the commune for the good of the citizens.⁶

The *podestà* became the instrument through which the city could underline the foundations of civic liberties to all of its inhabitants, such as is read in two treatises written in honour of this magistracy; that is, the *Oculus pastoralis*, written by an anonymous author around 1222,⁷ and the *Liber de regimine civitatum*, presumably written by John of Viterbo at the end of the first half of the Duecento.⁸ In the *Oculus pastoralis* the anonymous author writes that the human consortium is upheld by respect for the law and therefore by the correct administration of justice, the reason for which a *podestà* must never pronounce an unjust sentence. A good leader must never collect money illicitly nor must he ever oppress those who are not in his jurisdiction, because his only task is that of acting according to the system of justice so that in his city, peace and tranquillity reign; in the community ruled by him, prosperity and harmony reign; and among his citizens, concord and friendship reign.⁹ In the same *Oculus pastoralis*, the *podestà* is accused by Justice of not having respected the civic laws, thus the anonymous author assigns the following title to the closing dialogue of the treatise between the personification of the justice system and the *podestà*: 'Invective of Justice against the Citizens'.¹⁰ Accused by Justice, 'our mother and light' (*pia mater et lux nostra*), the *podestà* attempts to vindicate himself by affirming that he had adopted arbitrary decisions because of the

⁵ Gaudenzi, 'Sulla cronologia delle opere dei dettatori bolognesi', pp. 146–50.

⁶ 'De fare quelle cose [...] che pertegnano ad statum et a grandeca di questo communo, et ad adacresamento de gloria e d'onore de tuti quilli c'amenno questa citade': Faba, 'Parlamentata et epistole (1243–1244)', p. 156. On Guido Faba, see Francesco Bausi, Faba, Guido, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 45 (1995), pp. 413–19.

⁷ 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi. On the *Oculus pastoralis*, see Franceschi, 'L'*Oculus pastoralis* e la sua fortuna', and *Speeches from the 'Oculus pastoralis'*.

⁸ John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, pp. 215–80.

⁹ 'Verum est quod deliberantibus vobis placuit me habere in potestatem et rectorem vestrum pro anno futuro; quam electionem, cum ipsa sicut vobis moris est mihi fuit oblata, suscepi animo diligent, et habeo in firmo proposito mentis mee, quantum mihi gratia divina permiserit, portare regimen mihi commissum non recusato labore, cum omni dilligentia, pura fide, continuato studio et recto opere ad honorem, profectum et omne commodum terre vestre, servando iustitiam, cuique sine personarum acceptione tribuendo ius suum, non declinans ad desteram vel sinistram': *De prima concione cum terra fuerit in pace*, in 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, pp. 24–26 (p. 25).

¹⁰ 'Invectiva iusticie contra rectores gentium': 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, pp. 66–67; for the entire dialogue, cf. pp. 66–70.

extreme corruption of the times.¹¹ The last word belongs, however, to Justice, at least for the parts of the work that remain, according to whom the sustainer of government must be honest in his manners and capable of promoting peace and concord among the citizenry.¹² And it is thus that, after a final reference to Sallust's conscript father (*patres conscripti*), the author of the *Oculus pastoralis* concentrates on the capacity of the leaders to conserve the city in peace and tranquillity, because a statesman can be considered capable only in the moment he demonstrates himself to be able to promote friendship, to control his emotions, to subdue political passions, and to limit the hatred between factions; namely, to not allow anger to obscure intellect.¹³

In the *Liber de regimine civitatum*, instead, John of Viterbo, assessor of the *podestà* of Florence, underlines how the *podestà* must have as his only objective that of guaranteeing political freedom to his citizens, a founding virtue of *civitas*, since, he writes, 'the city is defined as that place in which the liberties of the citizens are guaranteed'.¹⁴ As the captain directs and governs his ship, thus the *podestà* protects the city and its inhabitants through the justice system and the law. In the initial phases of the *Liber de regimine civitatum*, John emphasizes that 'all the cities are today divided' in the knowledge that 'as virtues are failing in the leadership, so fails the good effects of the government, and the ruler is accused of bad administration'.¹⁵ Civil liberty can be achieved only when the *podestà* applies his abilities as *rector* and as *rheto*r, leader and orator: when, that is, he is able to overcome internal conflicts. The great maturity of John of Viterbo lies in having rediscovered the importance of dialectics, a virtue thanks to which the *podestà* can alleviate conflicts, make decisions, and enforce the law inasmuch as he is 'skilled in rhetoric and a morally honest orator'.¹⁶

¹¹ 'Corrupti sunt mores hominum ultra modum et abominabiles facte sunt semite impiorum': 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, p. 68.

¹² 'Honestus moribus, ut fidem conservet, suadeat pacem, concordiam commendat, discordiam evellat de mentibus auditorum, si poterit': 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, p. 69.

¹³ 'Impedit ira animum': 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, p. 70.

¹⁴ 'Civitas autem dicitur civium libertas': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, rub. X, p. 218.

¹⁵ 'Civitates omnes hodie sint divise', nella consapevolezza che 'cessantibus virtutibus in pre-side, cesset bonus effectus regiminis, et rector propter malam administrationem vilipendatur': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, rub. XI, p. 221.

¹⁶ 'Eloquentissimus et bonus orator': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, rub. XI, p. 220 e rub. LXVI, p. 243.

The use of rhetoric permits the *podestà* to pursue political balance in sustaining the city according to the rules of justice, punishing all those who gravitate outside the social rules imposed by the civic statutes. These are the two treatises that open the literature on communal self-government and from which the idea of assigning the governmental powers of the city to the *podestà* emerges. As head of the community, then, the *podestà* must leave aside his personal emotions and passions in the fulfilment of his duties because they can interfere with his obligations and threaten the common good. With the analysis of the political mandate entrusted to the *podestà* by the city-state, the themes of politics begin to be defined, and the necessity of acting according to the justice system in order to guarantee civil order begins to develop. The managing of politics is tied to the virtues of the leaders and, therefore, to the art of good governance, the only practice through which civic liberties can be guaranteed. These concepts are punctually synthesized in the second half of the thirteenth century by Brunetto Latini (c. 1220–94), according to whom cities are constructed in order to defend themselves from external enemies and from the ambitious who wish to impose their will onto others.¹⁷ For the Florentine notary, the city, as is read in *Trésor*, is a congregation of ‘people united together in order to reside in the same place and to live according to the same law’,¹⁸ in which there are three types of government: ‘the first is of kings, the second is of the good, the third is of communes, which is by far the best among these others’.¹⁹ In the chapter on the government of the cities, Brunetto highlights that when the supreme power is in the hands of ‘vertical’ governments — that is, held by kings or by princes as in the case of France —, only their own interests are considered, because everyone else is ‘subjected to the power of the king and of the other perpetual princes, who sell civil offices and entrust them to those who pay the highest price, with little consideration for their ability or for the supremacy of the middle-class’.²⁰ When instead the power is in the hands of ‘horizontal’ governments, it is the same communities of citizens, as in the case of the Italian

¹⁷ On Brunetto Latini, cf. Inglese, ‘Latini, Brunetto’.

¹⁸ ‘Que citez est un assemlent de genz a habiter en un leuc et vivre a une loi’: Latini, *Trésor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk II, para. 73, p. 790.

¹⁹ ‘Seignories sont de .iiii. manieres: l’une est des rois, la seconde est des bons, la tierce est des comunes, la quele est la tres meillor entre ces autres’: Latini, *Trésor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk II, para. 44, p. 412.

²⁰ ‘Qui sont souzmis a la seignorie des rois et des autres princes perpetuels, qui vendent les prevostés et les baillent a ceaus qui plus l’achotent, poi gardent ne sa bonté ne le profit des borjois’: Latini, *Trésor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk III, para. 73, p. 792.

communes, that manage public affairs as a unit, because, writes Brunetto, 'the citizens, the middle-class and all the city's inhabitants elect the *podestà* and the leader that they deem to be most advantageous to the common benefit of the city and of all its subjects'.²¹

Brunetto Latini bequeaths to the communal tradition, and later to the republican tradition of the Renaissance, the nexus between common good and citizenship as a *corpus* in which the supreme values of community life are to be found. As other theorists of communal government, the Florentine notary asserts that the magistrates of the republics must be elected for their civic virtues, thanks to which they receive the trust of the supreme powers on behalf of the community. The ruler is the fulcrum of the city, so if he governs according to the principles of justice and reason, he gives rise to a peaceful and prosperous society in the well-being and consensus of the inhabitants; if instead he governs without reason, he gives rise to divisions and wars that conduct the community of citizens towards an inexorable decline. Brunetto is well aware that the election of magistrates based on family origins rather than on personal virtues leads the Italian city-states toward inevitable ruin.²²

Adopting the historical phenomenon of the Greek *polis* as a model, the culture of the Italian cities of the centre and north absorbs the term 'liberty' and transforms it into a synonym of self-government, a crucial word regarding the contrast that will definitively liberate the communal entities from the will of the German emperors. Freedom and self-government are the terms utilized in the arena of internal relations between citizens of the same community and those who redefine the conditions of dependence dictated by the fledgling territorial formations. 'Freedom' is the word that serves to proclaim independence from possible foreign domination and that, therefore, powerfully enters into the political vocabulary. In the year 1288, in evident contrast with the political reality of Milan, where the *signoria* had already replaced the government of the *popolo*, Bonvesin de la Riva (c. 1240–1315) dedicated the *De commendatione Mediolani ratione libertatis* to the ideal of civic and republican life: in the

²¹ 'En Ytaile, que li citien et les borjois et les comunitez des villes eslissent lor poesté et sor seingnor tel come il cuident qui soit plus profitable au comun prou de la ville et de toz ses sub-jés': Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk III, para. 73, p. 792.

²² Giovanni Villani will write of him as a 'uomo di grande senno e autoritade' (Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk VII, chap. 73), with a 'gran filosofo, e [...] sommo maestro in rettorica [...], mondano uomo, ma di lui avemo fatta menzione però ch'egli fue cominciatore e maestro in digrossare i Fiorentini, e farli scorti in bene parlare, e in sapere guidare e reggere la nostra repubblica secondo la Politica (IX, 10).

panegyric to his city, the chronicler planned and realized a complex proposal for the ideal city based on the guarantee of liberty to the citizenry of Milan offered by the communal authorities.²³ A generation later, Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) recounted the decline of the Padovan commune, underlining the contrast with the servile condition that must be accepted in the hereditary *signorie*, repeatedly equating the attempt of his fellow citizens to preserve the *res publica* with the attack of the Scaligeri family in the fight to defend the liberty of his native city.²⁴

Freedom is the slogan adopted by the city-states in the time of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) in order to persuade citizens and to consolidate their internal political power, which is continuously torn apart by private interests. Freedom is the term that such political entities will utilize in order to reach the role of dominant city in the surrounding territory between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when a program of political propaganda will be set in motion that will consolidate their status beyond the protected space of the city walls. ‘Liberty’ becomes the slogan to utilize against the seignorial regimes which arise almost everywhere in central and northern Italy following the failure of the governments of the popular model.²⁵ Even Tolomeo Fiadoni, better known as Ptolemy of Lucca (1236–1327),²⁶ asserts that the republican models of government are the best forms of government, as they are capable of being generated by and of generating civic virtues and liberties while monarchical systems are not. Basing himself on Ptolemy, Tolomeo, too, sees in the mixed constitutions of ancient Greece (Sparta, Crete), of Carthage, and in the Roman republic the precursory political forms of the governments of the *popolo* of communal Italy.²⁷

Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1313/14–1357), professor of law at the University of Perugia, distinguishes states according to three measures of greatness, each

²³ ‘Tanta est civitatis naturalis libertas et corporum sanctorum copiosa tutela, quod alicuius extranee tyrannidis dominatio, sicut in nostris temporibus patuit’: Bonvesin de la Riva, *De magnalibus urbis Mediolani*, ed. by Comoletti, p. 24.

²⁴ ‘Pro patria libertate decertant’: Mussato, ‘De gestis italicorum post mortem Henrici VII Caesaris historia’, ed. by Muratori, p. 658.

²⁵ Brown, ‘De-masking Renaissance Republicanism’.

²⁶ On Tolomeo Fiadoni’s life, see Blythe, *The Life and Works of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)*.

²⁷ Blythe, *The Worldview and Thought of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)*. The theme of republicanism in relation to the Italian city-states and to the political thinkers of the communal age is also well developed in Mundy, ‘In Praise of Italy’.

of which is more suitable to one of the forms of government classified by Aristotle. His synthesis of republican thought *ante litteram* (before the humanists) is seen in *De regimine civitatis*, the treatise on the government of the cities written almost simultaneously with the *De Tyranno* between 1355 and 1357.²⁸ Here Bartolo proposes a classification of political regimes that decisively demonstrates the influence of the Aristotelian lesson and that allows a glimpse of what will be the stronghold of the later ideology of what is known as civic Guelphism.²⁹ The jurist asserts that a monocratic regime is not the appropriate political form for the city-states (*civitates*) given that the requirements for prestige of a king are such that they cannot be satisfied by the territorial confines or by the limits of the number of men organized by a single urban populace. For Bartolo, the monarchy is ill suited for the *civitates*, because it does not have the necessary resources to sustain the costly magnificence of the king in the same way that it cannot support an aristocratic government, both because in the cities the wealthy people are always too few — and the majority of the citizenry is formed by the *popolo* — and because they are divided amongst themselves, which gives rise to dissent, conflict, and civil discord.³⁰ According to Bartolo, the appropriate form for the smaller *civitas* is neither a republic nor a *signoria*, but a ‘popular’ system, as demonstrated by the example of Perugia, whose peace, unity, and prosperity — and, therefore, good government — was recognized in 1355 even by Emperor Charles IV of Luxembourg (1316–78), who was returning that year from Rome following his coronation as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.³¹ When the *civitas* dominates other *civitates* along with their territories, then the best form of government becomes a monarchy, the only one that can attain the universality of the Empire. In this sense, Bartolo overcomes the categorical barriers that are found in the difference between a republic and a *signoria* by emphasizing, in the same *De regimine civitatis*, that good government disregards these two forms of government in the name of the common good.³²

²⁸ Bartolo da Sassoferrato, ‘Tractatus de tyranno’, ed. by Quaglioni. On the ‘Tractatus de tyranno’, see Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto*, pp. 7–71. On the bestowal of the different ranks to men and to cities, see Ercole, *Dal comune al principato*, pp. 280–352. On the notion of *civitas sibi princeps*, see Ryan, ‘Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Free Cities’, p. 66.

²⁹ Bartolo Da Sassoferrato, ‘De regimine civitatis.’

³⁰ Bartolo Da Sassoferrato, ‘De regimine civitatis’, pp. 162–63.

³¹ Bartolo Da Sassoferrato, ‘De regimine civitatis’, pp. 163–64.

³² Pauler, *La Signoria dell’Imperatore*, pp. 35–76, and Bruni, *La città divisa*, pp. 19–24.

With the goal of avoiding the formation of authoritarian regimes, the communal cities promoted a continuous turnover among the highest offices of the state. Between 1282 and 1532, Florentine and Siennese politicians (the latter above all between 1287 and 1355) held the highest government office for only two months. At the end of their term they were required to answer to a special commission with real powers of control over their political actions (*sindacatus*). Niccolò Machiavelli underlines how in Lucca one of the aspects of proto-democracy lay above all in the office of the Elders (*Anziani*), a body which held the executive power that represented the centre of government together with the Gonfalonier of Justice, guaranteeing transparency and plurality.³³

The example of Lucca is emblematic because, following the expulsion of Paolo Guinigi (1376–1432), who in 1430 was removed from power after a popular revolt headed by Pietro Cenami and Lorenzo Bonvisi, the city returned to the republican system. Full powers were given to the extraordinary authority of the Twelve, an office — formed by citizens chosen according to a wide range of representational criteria from families of nobles, merchants, and others of even more humble origins — that had the mandate of conducting the war against Florence and of restoring the republican institutions. After thirty years since the assumption of power by Guinigi, first nominated captain and defender of the *popolo*, then *signore* (21 November 1400), Lucca returned to a republic, reintegrating the magistracies of the Thirty-Six, of the Elders, and of the Gonfalonier's tenure. At the same time, however, the city promoted a process of oligarchic concentration, limiting the access of these officials to a small nucleus of families with a long tradition (Burlamacchi, Cenami, Guinigi, Rapondi) and to a group of families of more recent origins (Arnolfini, Balbani, Tegrimi). An analysis of the magistracy of the Elders between 1430 and 1494 reveals that only about 150 families were involved in the highest public offices, of which only about seventy families were present at the vertex of the republic for the entire seventy-year period, while about fifteen of these families appeared only in the second half of the century.³⁴

Technically ruled by a republican political structure, Genoa, as well, was in reality controlled by an oligarchy which corresponded to a restricted group of mercantile families from which was elected the *doge* beginning in 1339. Here, from the first republic called of the consuls, the city moved on to the second of the *podestà*, then to a third of the captains of the *popolo*, then to the fourth of

³³ Machiavelli, 'Sommario delle cose della città di Lucca', ed. by Martelli.

³⁴ Bratchel, *Lucca, 1430–1494*.

the *dogi*, who served for life, and finally to the fifth of the elected *dogi*, who led the city and its territory for two years. Matteo Senarega, *doge* of Genoa from 1595 to 1597, would later write in his *Discorso sopra la Città e la Repubblica di Genova* that Genoa

does not belong to any of the three good governments nor to any of the three bad ones, named by Aristotle; but it is a mixture of these; it is not a democracy in any way, since the *popolo* does not govern there; it is not an aristocracy, since all the members, that is those of the noble families, govern there; it cannot be called freedom because the justice system is severe for the *popolo*.³⁵

Here the election of Simon Boccanegra, the first citizen *doge*, was achieved without apparent restrictions, as it was promoted by the vote of the *popolo*, or, even better, by that of the wealthy middle-class merchants and non-noble businessmen (*popolo grasso*), while the less well-off classes of workers of the minor trade professions were considered inelectable.³⁶ For generations only two families monopolized the office of the *doge*: the Adorno family, with close ties to imperial power; and the Fregoso family, with close ties to papal power. Tomaso Fregoso (1370–1453) was, for example, elected *doge* three times, in 1415, in 1421, and in 1437. An extreme situation was reached in 1461 when the archbishop of Genoa, Paolo Fregoso, had the *doge* taken to his palace and offered him the possibility of renouncing the office or of being hanged in the town square.³⁷

With about fifty thousand inhabitants midway through the *Trecento*, Siena was one of the major Italian cities, and it remained such even a few decades later, when, although profoundly reduced on an economic and demographic level (between 1450 and 1460 the city's population was around fifteen thousand inhabitants), it was defined in the *Commentarii* by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–64), Pope Pius II, as one of the important cities of the political scene on the peninsula.³⁸ The Government of the Nine (1287–1355) attempted to appear as dispenser of social peace and therefore guarantor of economic pros-

³⁵ 'Non appartiene a nessun dei tre governi buoni, né ai tre cattivi, notati da Aristotele; bensì è un miscuglio di questi; non è democrazia in alcuna maniera, poiché il popolo non vi governa; non è aristocrazia, poiché tutti gli ascritti, cioè gli ottimati, vi governano; licenza non può chiamarsi perché del popolo si fa severa giustizia': quoted in Spinola, *La restaurazione della Repubblica Ligure*, pp. 410–11.

³⁶ Petti Balbi, 'Genova'.

³⁷ Taviani, *Peace and Revolt*, pp. 119–36.

³⁸ Pius II, *I commentarii*, ed. by Totaro, I, bk I, chap. 31, pp. 164–65.

perity, and it asked Ambrogio Lorenzetti to translate these ideas in a fresco painting, that of *Good Government*. The Aristotelian ideas that animate it were also alive later in preachers like San Bernardino da Siena (1380–1444), who in the 1420s referred to the Siennese fresco to underline how the *popolo* had maintained both a prosperous public and private life in the city in the name of the common good.³⁹ Between this period of the Government of the Nine, in which the *popolo* was more ‘open’ towards its lower ranks, and the successive political phases, where the oligarchical nature of the ruling class was increasingly noticeable, there occurred a series of tumults, conspiracies, and repressive actions which led back to both the persistent predominance of the nobility on the economic and social planes and to the internal divisions of the *popolo*.⁴⁰

The permanent state of conflict within the communes promoted the affirmation of seigniorial governments. This happened even in political situations where the republican tradition had been consolidated, such as in Florence. The commune of Florence competed on several occasions with vertical governments ruled by a *signore*. Thus, the *signoria* of Charles of Anjou, ruler between 1267 and 1279, was followed in the course of the first half of the fourteenth century by the domination of Robert of Anjou (*signore* of the city from 1313 to 1322), Charles of Calabria (son of Robert of Anjou and *signore* of the city from 1326 to 1328), and Walter of Brienne (*signore* of the city from 1342 to 1343). If, on the one hand, these attempts at civic peace had the effect of further embittering the fight between opposing factions; on the other hand, they favoured the beginning of a fertile political discussion among intellectuals oriented towards guaranteeing the alternation and the distribution of public offices, the goal of which became maintaining as much balance as possible in the relationships among the various identities present in the city.⁴¹

The Florentine regime reinforced its own republican identity in the course of the *Trecento*, modifying its electoral system and giving life to a mechanism

³⁹ ‘Voltandomi a la pace, veggo le mercanzie andare a torno, e veggo balli, veggo ricconciare le case, veggo lavorare vigne e terre, seminare, andare a’ bagni a cavallo, veggo andare le fanciulle a marito, veggo le gregge de le pecore’: San Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari inedite*, ed. by Pacetti, pp. 458–59. On San Bernardino da Siena, see the third paragraph, *On Internal Politics: Ideals and Institutions*, in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 63–76.

⁴⁰ Bowsky, ‘The Medieval Commune and Internal Violence’, and Bowsky, ‘The Anatomy of Rebellion in Fourteenth-Century Siena’.

⁴¹ Cf. Simeoni, *Le Signorie*, pp. 49–65; Rubinstein, ‘Florence and the Despots’; Jones, ‘Communes and Despots’; Pennington, *The Prince and the Law*, pp. 165–201; Green, ‘Florence and the Republican Tradition’, pp. 477–78; and Maire Vigueur, ‘Le rivolte cittadine contro i Tiranni’.

that guaranteed, at least in theory, a random model of composition of the magistracies. In 1328 the executive leaders of the Republic of Florence decided to follow the fall of the *signoria* of the Calabrian duke with the formation of a special commission capable of elaborating a procedure that responded to these requirements. Here, Florence opens the chapter of a more 'proto-democratic' form of republicanism with more officers in more offices and more eligible citizens, a phase that concluded only with the introduction of the Medici duchy in 1532. The result was the emanation of a law for the introduction of the election (*squttinio*), approved by the city's parliament in order to restore civic liberties and to avoid the possibility of dangerous concentrations of power and accession by foreign *signori*. The law was articulated according to four principal phases: the first phase (*reductio* or *recata*) consisting of the drafting of three lists of names, one of which must have been prepared by the Captains of the Guelph Party; the second (*squttinio*) consisting of the voting on the names of citizens suitable for carrying out the responsibilities of the commune by the members in charge of the most important civic magistracies; the third (*imborsazione*) consisting of the deposition of slips of paper with the approved names in several bags, each one related to a single office; and the fourth phase (*estrazione*) consisting of the random drawing from the bags of names of who will make up the new office once the term of the current office holders comes to an end. As the rise to power of Walter of Brienne will demonstrate, the law of 1328 did not succeed in avoiding the birth of a new seignorial regime in the city, which, however, strove to render 'sacred' the principle of civic liberty as a response. When the duke was expelled from Florence on 26 July 1343, Giovanni Villani wrote that the *popolo* of Florence was again united in obtaining the freedom of the city, and the community could restore political justice by conferring to the word liberty the meaning of the sum of rights owed to the citizenry so it could then 'recover their [of the citizenry] liberty and that of the republic of the Commune'.⁴²

This popular uprising determined the end of the duke's tyranny, and it promoted the beginning of one of the most important cults for the city, one which allowed it to adhere to the most profound Christian tradition: the cult of Saint Anne.⁴³ The expulsion occurred on 26 July 1343, the day dedicated

⁴² 'Ricoverare la loro libertà [di cittadini] e quella della repubblica del Comune': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 17. Cf. also Stefani, *Cronica fiorentina*, ed. by Rodolico, rub. 583, p. 208: 'Mentrechè il popolo di Firenze assediava il Duca, e combatteano il palagio per la libertà della città, furono trovati alcuni ufficiali del Duca [...]'.
⁴³ On the fresco of *Sant'Anna e la cacciata del duca d'Atene*, see Kreytenberg, 'Bomerkungen

to Saint Anne. The commune of Florence commissioned Andrea Orcagna to paint Saint Anne and the Expulsion of the Duke of Athens (*Sant'Anna e la cacciata del duca d'Atene*) in the courtyard of the prison of the *Stinche*, where many political opponents of the duke had been imprisoned. The goal of the painting was to create a sacred work and an effective manifesto of political propaganda. Considering that in the course of the Middle Ages both Joachim and Anne were venerated by a continuous popular devotion extending back to the early period of Christianity, with the adoption of Anne as protectress (Anne is the mother of Mary and the grandmother of Christ), the commune of Florence began an iconographic tradition with a strong emotional impact on the citizenry.⁴⁴ Giovanni Villani, in fact, writes that on 26 July 1343 the government of the city of Florence returned to political freedom, and that the feast of Saint Anne began to assume as much importance as Easter, celebrated with offerings and donations to the commune.⁴⁵ Orcagna's iconographic representation portrays Anne in a gesture of protection towards the town hall (*Palazzo della Signoria*), while the usurper of republican ideals, accused of having occupied 'with fraud and betrayal the liberty of the Republic of Florence',⁴⁶ is chased off the throne. He is depicted in the act of turning over the standard of the commune to the *popolo* in arms and kneeling at the feet of the saint in a clear act of submission.⁴⁷ On 11 February 1398, the captains of Orsanmichele availed themselves of a considerable sum thanks to a resolution that the major council of the Republic enacted in their favour. Thus, they were able to commission Mariotto di Nardo for the painting of the north-east span of ceiling where Saint Anne is among the figures represented. The saint becomes the emblem of the city exactly because she is depicted in the church of the civic trades and, therefore, in the sacred place of the Florence ruled by a government of the *popolo*. Anne holds in her arms an ideal representation of the city enclosed by walls and

zum Freske der Vertreibung des Duca d'Atene aus Florenz', and Crum and Wilkins, 'In the Defence of Florentine Republicanism'. On the veneration of the Saint, see Valentini, *Sant'Anna dei fiorentini*, and Valentini, 'L'iconografia fiorentina di Sant'Anna'.

⁴⁴ On this theme, cf. Benvenuti, *Pastori di popolo*, pp. 138–39, as well as Benvenuti, 'Sant'Anna tra devozione civica e culto'.

⁴⁵ 'Che illa festa di santa Anna si guardasse come pasqua sempre in Firenze, e si celebrasse solenne ufficio e grande offerta per lo Comune e per tutte l'arti di Firenze': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, 1 chap. 7.

⁴⁶ 'Con frode e tradigione la libertà della repubblica di Firenze': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 17.

⁴⁷ Crum and Wilkins, 'In the Defence of Florentine Republicanism'.

characterized by the polyhedric shape of the baptistry that — together with the palace of the priors or the Cathedral of Santa Reparata first, and of Santa Maria del Fiore later — always symbolizes Florence in the previous and coeval representations of the city.⁴⁸

The direct influence of Franco-Angioin power came to an end in Florence with the expulsion of Walter of Brienne, which thus began a process of political awareness that reaches full maturity at the end of the fourteenth century. The experience of Walter's *signoria* represented the occasion for the Florentines to realize the incompatibility of a seignorial regime with the city, although the awareness of the ideological contrast between the republican and the seignorial systems was reached only in the moment of conflict with Gian Galeazzo Visconti. Following Walter's rule, Florence promoted a government that was popular in nature and whose social foundations were progressively expanded and opened to the *popolo minuto*, which was partially invested with the exercise of civic duties. It has been calculated that in 1343 the number of eligible candidates is three thousand people, of which only 10 per cent (three hundred people) effectively has access to the major offices. In 1361, the number of those with access to the major offices rose to five hundred, and in 1382, 1750 of the 5000 people nominated received a public office. The clearest definition of the political nature of the Florentine constitution comes from Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), who in his *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* (1403) considers the government of Florence a mixture of democracy and aristocracy, because the short terms of those chosen by lot and the love of liberty are democratic principles, while the procedures of checks and the formation of laws are aristocratic ones.⁴⁹

An analysis of the social composition of the Republic of Florence in the course of the *Trecento* reveals an oligarchy in which only those members of the *popolo* belonging to a guild had access to the offices of what were known as the Three Majors (*Tre Maggiori*). The *Signoria* was composed of the Gonfalonier of Justice and the Priors of the Guilds and of the two chambers (*collegi*) which accompanied its activity in an established capacity from the 1320s on, with advisory roles through the Twelve Goodmen (*Dodici Buonomini*) and the Sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies (*Sedici Gonfalonieri delle Compagnie*). Excluded from the organs of the executive branch were those known as the magnates (*grandi*), to whom it was granted participation in offices of noteworthy prestige, such as embassies, military institutions, fiscal commissions, and

⁴⁸ Valentini, 'L'iconografia fiorentina di Sant'Anna', pp. 10–11.

⁴⁹ Hankins, 'Rhetoric, History, and Ideology', pp. 143–51, and Rubinstein, 'Florentine Constitutionalism and Medici Ascendancy', pp. 444–47.

the administration of subjected communities. The number of citizens to whom was granted the execution of highly important offices was very limited. Thus, the control of the levers of decisional power, the management of the commune's income, its internal politics, and its foreign policy were reserved for a limited number of citizens assessed at around a few hundred individuals. It was a substantially impenetrable and closed caste which systematically excludes all those who were not part of the world of work. The progressive increase in the number of those who could potentially hold political rights, even if quantitatively contained and systematically controlled by the executive branch, was the thorn in the foot of this system. The revolts and uprisings that occurred in Florence in the course of its republican history found explanation in the very system of recruitment of the political forces, which had its greatest difficulties in the ripartitioning of the offices. The exclusion of many important families following the Ordinances of Justice (*Ordinamenti di giustizia*) in 1293 was followed by the exclusion caused by the arguments and discord observable among the many lineages of popular extraction. In assimilating themselves to the behaviour of the violent and aggressive magnates, the latter gave life to conflicts which had repercussions on the instability of the city's government, both inside the walls and in the territory. Even the notoriously popular chronicler Giovanni Villani defines the members of his own social class as 'powerful and outrageous'.⁵⁰

The conscience of the civic *libertates* against the formation of tyrannical powers, just like the contrast between free communal law and tyranny, was a theme present in the historiography and in the propaganda of Florence — and in many other places — from its origins. There began to appear liberating slogans against the formation of tyrannical regimes following the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, as the facts reveal.⁵¹ After the events of 1343, in fact, the term 'liberty' became for the Florentines a synonym and symbol of a political community, and it was affixed, as a decision by the Priors of the Guilds in 1353 demonstrates, even on the facade of the *Palazzo della Signoria*. 'Liberty' was the motto of civic independence, and, in order for it to be visible by everyone, it was even painted under the arches of the gallery of the city hall, together with a series of emblems which characterized the Florentine republic (the fifth from the left of which, written in gold on a blue background, bears

⁵⁰ 'Possenti e oltraggiosi': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XII, chap. 287.

⁵¹ Becker, 'Gualtieri di Brienne e l'uso delle dispense giudiziarie'; Becker, 'Gualtieri di Brienne e la regolamentazione dell'usura a Firenze'; Becker, 'Le esecuzioni della legislazione contro le pratiche monopolistiche'; Becker, *Florence in Transition*, 1: *The Decline of the Comune*, chap. 4, pp. 123–76. See also Becker and Brucker, 'The *Arti minori* in Florentine Politics'.

the word *Libertas*).⁵² Between 1375 and 1378, Florence was at war with Pope Gregory XI in the name of the *iura comunis*, and the term *libertas* appeared as a slogan on the standards distributed to allies who remained on the side of the Florentines during this time. The awareness of the civic *libertates* affected cities like Ferrara and Bologna which were placed under pontifical political authority and exposed to continuous rebellions, and this ideal guided cities like Perugia, which in 1375 strenuously attempted to escape the Roman conquest of power with a revolt. The Florentine chroniclers did not miss the opportunity to write about their city's superiority in a propagandistic vein, as demonstrated by the words of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, who, in the same year of 1375, reminded us how Florence affixed on banners the word 'Liberty' so as to identify all the cities that were united with Florence against Pope Gregory XI.⁵³

The glorification of constitutional liberty guaranteed by the government of the guilds is continuously present in the writings of Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406),⁵⁴ the humanist who in 1376 turned to the government of Bologna, sustaining that the governments of merchants and artisans by nature love freedom, favour the equality of citizens, and do not vaunt their nobility or glorious ancestry. In the same year, Salutati condemns the actions of Gregory XI and defines the leaders of the church as tyrants. He then accuses the soldiers of the pope of being barbarians ready to oppress Italians who enjoy an unalienable freedom and exhorts Ancona, a free city like Florence, to maintain its own political independence by rebelling against the papal government and 'striving for a stable liberty'.⁵⁵ Salutati describes the Florentines as defenders of justice, without ambitions for power, ready to accept the succession when called to exercise a public office and ready to obey the laws when they return to private life. In the epistolary written as an acting public functionary, Salutati affirms that the Florentine government is the best form of government for every *civitas*, that the regime of the *popolo* carries within it the seed of liberty, and that for all this Florence can be considered the custodian of the freedom of the Italian peninsula.⁵⁶ The principle cause of the identification of the term *populus* with the heading *libertas* was to be found in the pressure exerted on Tuscany and on

⁵² Rubinstein, 'Florence and the Despots'; and Rubinstein, 'Florentinà Libertas', pp. 276–78.

⁵³ 'Bandiera, la quale era tutta rossa con lettere a traverso, come quelle di Roma; ma questa bandiera dicea "Libertà": Stefani, *Cronica fiorentina*, ed. by Rodolico, rub. 753, pp. 293–94.

⁵⁴ On Coluccio Salutati, see Witt, *Sulle tracce degli antichi*, pp. 299–346.

⁵⁵ 'Libertas Italie': quoted in Witt, *Sulle tracce degli antichi*, p. 316.

⁵⁶ De Rosa, *Coluccio Salutati*, pp. 87–128.

Umbria by the papacy, by the Scaligeri family, and by the Visconti family. The result was that in Florence the necessity to defend the established balances was affirmed, and emphasis was placed on the political differences between the various systems of government. When Pistoia became subjugated to Florence in 1401, for example, the Florentines promoted themselves as guardians of civic liberty in contrast to the tyrannical pretensions of the Visconti, a prospect that was ably overturned by the words of Gioannozzo Manetti, who made it appear to be a choice by the Pistoians to concede great liberty to the Florentine people in the control of their own city.⁵⁷ Following Manetti's example, Coluccio Salutati in 1403 invokes the just war against the Duchy of Milan in response to the spokesman of the Visconti court in Milan, affirming that the communities entering into the fold of the Florentine state are always brought to freedom and therefore kept out of the hands of tyrants.⁵⁸

Following the Ciompi insurrection in 1378, the protection of republican freedoms was entrusted to a commission of the *signoria*, the Eight Guardians of Security (*Otto di guardia*), which coordinated the protection of the city and of its territories from all those who threatened it.⁵⁹ The creation of the Eight as an agency of secret police opened a heated debate among intellectuals of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries about the concept of political reality and the perception of freedom. The defender of popular sovereignty, Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64), asserts in his *De concordantia catholica* (1433) that a society can be defined as such only if governed by supreme laws.⁶⁰ In Florence, where the progressive verticalization of the elites in power occurred after the restoration of the guild-controlled government in 1382, the Medici family appropriated the slogans and symbols of the republican tradition over a period of about fifty years. If, in fact, the standards and the shields with *libertas* written on them were symbols of Florence as protectress of liberty in the war against Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the slogan of the *Florentina libertas* reached

⁵⁷ Milner, 'Capitoli e clienti a Pistoia', pp. 411–16.

⁵⁸ Salutati, 'Invectiva in Antonium Luschum', ed. by Garin, pp. 31–33.

⁵⁹ 'Circa custodiam civitatis et attentantes aliquod contra statum in civitate vel extra': Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Consulte e pratiche*, 16, f. 16^v.

⁶⁰ 'Legis autem latio per eos omnes, qui per eam stringi debent, aut maiorem partem aliorum electione fieri debet, quoniam ad commune conferre debet, et quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus approbari debet, et communis diffinitio ex omnium consensu aut maioris partis solum elicitur. Quare etiam melius pro re publica existit legibus quam optimo viro regi [...]. Ubi enim non principantur leges, ibi non est politia': Nicholas of Cusa, *De concordantia catholica libri tres*, ed. by Kellen, III: *Proemium* (1963), pp. 276–77.

the halls of the *Palazzo della Signoria* where the decision was made to change the definition of the office of the Priors of the Guilds into Priors of Liberty after the political crisis of 1458. At the end of the veiled *signoria* of Cosimo the Elder, the Florentines coined a medal portraying the city as the image of a young woman who wore the inscription 'Peace and Public Liberty (*Pax Libertasque Publica*).⁶¹ The *libertas* slogan in Florence was enriched at the semantic level by a new attribute beginning in 1465 when, following the death of Cosimo the Elder, the Florentine citizen Giovanni Giugni asked that 'the emblem of liberty be put on the rostrum [of the Council Chamber] as a sign of restored liberty'.⁶²

The notions of tyranny and freedom are not only aimed at confusing or persuading the adversary, since accusing an antagonist of being a tyrant and of denying liberty means to delegitimize him politically and to prepare the way for a war of conquest for a just cause.⁶³ It is curious to note how the tables can be turned when necessary, as the case of Matteo di Meglio demonstrates: in one of his sonnets from the 1430s, di Meglio, in an anti-Viscontean vein, writes about the loyalty of the Florentines to Francesco Sforza (1401–66), who in his words is a champion of freedom against every type of tyranny.⁶⁴ In reality, when Filippo Maria Visconti died in August of 1447 and after the institution of what is known as the Golden Ambrosian Republic (a form of republican government instituted by a group of Milanese noblemen), Milan defended itself from Venice by placing itself in the hands of the same Francesco Sforza. Thanks to his remarkable strategic capabilities, Sforza was able to take advantage of the crisis of the republic to get himself nominated the new Duke of Milan on 25 March

⁶¹ The medals, produced mechanically and relatively inexpensively, were the appropriate means for spreading political messages and for providing a good impression of the governmental system. The use of medals for propagating political messages is confirmed in the *Quattrocento* by another Florentine example: Lorenzo the Magnificent, in fact, coined medals following the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478 and for his return from Naples in 1480. See Burke, *Cultura e società nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, pp. 135–40 (p. 135).

⁶² 'Lo stemma della libertà fosse posto sul rostro [della camera del consiglio] come segno della libertà restaurata': this statement comes from a speech given by Giovanni Giugni on 3 November 1465 and is found in Pampaloni, 'Fermenti di riforme democratiche nelle consulte della Repubblica fiorentina', p. 251. The following scholars have written about the importance of this quote: Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici*, p. 164, and Brown, 'De-masking Renaissance Republicanism', p. 184.

⁶³ On the theme of a just war, see the considerations of Bartolo da Sassoferrato in Quagliioni, *Politica e diritto*, pp. 26–27.

⁶⁴ Ruini, 'I sonetti politici di Antonio di Matteo di Meglio', namely the sonnet *O Conte illustre, l'avere et la vita alle*, pp. 90–95.

1450, thereby denying the city and its territories the liberty announced in the preceding republican period.⁶⁵

The ideology of the *Florentina libertas* finds a more developed and elaborate form of expression in the works of Leonardo Bruni, who interprets the past of the city as a historic mission of struggle against every tyrant, both internal and external, one who ties the term 'liberty' to ancient culture, to the tradition of classical antiquity, and therefore to the greatness of republican Rome.⁶⁶ In his eyes it is laudable for the government to defend the selection of those men allowed access to the management of public affairs and to be committed to choosing the best citizens who have the good government of the city as their goal. In reality, these are propagandistic formulas promoted by a republican government to be compared to those promoted by the governments of a seignorial model, which in turn spreads messages about the advantages of a monocratic government as promotor of peace and justice. The concrete results of battles fought with such forms of ideological propaganda is something that escapes every attempt at verification; at the most, what can be proven is that both the notion of tyranny and that of freedom are systematically used by governments with precise practical objectives.⁶⁷

The republican political model opposed the seignorial model because in republican systems, such as the Florentine government, contrary to what happened in seignorial models like the Milanese regime, the election of public offices was alternating and, although all the candidates belonged to the same lobby, it never suffered the imposition of the transfer of executive power through inheritance. The guiding principle of the Renaissance republican systems was based on the non-existence of a *signore* and on the fact that only the citizenry was at the centre of interest of the leadership: it was the entire body politic, as the precepts left to us by Cicero in his *De officiis* suggest, that must be taken care of, even at the expense of the ruling class' own interests. The Latin

⁶⁵ Del Tredici, 'Lombardy under the Visconti and the Sforza'.

⁶⁶ 'Ricuperata da poi la libertà de' popoli Italici per la cacciata de' Longobardi, i quali ducento e quattro anni tenuta avevano Italia occupata: le città di Toscana et l'altre cominciarono a riaversi et a dare opera alli studi et alquanto limare il grosso stilo; et così a poco a poco vennero ripigliando vigore, ma molto debolmente et senza vero giudizio di gentilezza alcuna, più tosto attendendo a dire in rima volgare, che ad altro; et così per insino al tempo di Dante lo stilo litterato pochi sapeano, et quelli pochi sapeano assai male, come dicemmo nella vita di Dante': Bruni, 'Vita del Petrarca', ed. by Viti, p. 555.

⁶⁷ Vasoli, 'La trattatistica politica a Firenze e Milano', pp. 69–71.

writer of the last republican period affirms that to behave differently means to introduce sedition and discord into the citizenry.⁶⁸

After the drafting of the civic statute of 1308, which had only in appearance consolidated the class of merchant bankers, the Republic of Lucca was subjected to the political influence of foreign powers between 1314 and 1369, and the theme of liberty forcefully returned to fashion among the most attentive observers of the city. The chronicler Giovanni Sercambi (1348–1424) summarizes the impact on the citizens of Pisan dominance over Lucca, underlining the anguish of the citizenry at the submission to the rival city, in particular to the *signoria* of the Doge Giovanni dell’Agnello, who is defined an aggressive wolf (*lupo rapacie*) according to the codified terminology typical of the anti-noble propaganda.⁶⁹ Sercambi asserts in various parts of his work how the Pisan domination causes enormous damage to the city.⁷⁰ And still, when in 1369 the city was liberated from Pisan control and ends up under the imperial authority of Charles IV,⁷¹ the chronicler underlines how the people of Lucca favourably welcomed the emperor with his supremacy capable of clearing their city of Pisan doges.⁷²

In Lucca the reconquered liberty conceded by Charles IV in 1369 led to the installation of a government set up by the *popolo*, and the theme of republican liberty was once again at the centre of the new statutes enacted by the republic. In 1372 attention was paid to finding systems which prevented the possibility of access to public offices for families and consortia of the ancient consular tradition. The civic freedoms were guaranteed through the strengthening of the rediscovered institutional structure and, therefore, also in the drafting of the new statutory laws, according to which the Elders were considered vicars of the Empire: nobles who were knights (*nobiles qui sunt milites*) and the important families of the Opizzi, the Quartiglioni, the Salamoncelli, the

⁶⁸ ‘Ex quo evenit, ut alii populares, alii studiosi optimi cuiusque videantur, pauci universorum’: Cicero, *I doveri*, ed. by Narducci, bk I, chap. 85, p. 42.

⁶⁹ Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 199.

⁷⁰ ‘Pisani acquistaron di Luccha il signoraggio, questa terra più bella de’ christiani facta avean diventar luogo selvaggio’: Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 198.

⁷¹ ‘E di vero la libertà di Lucha gostò di denari contanti a’ ciptadini di Lucha più di fiorini 300.000 d’oro’: Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 174.

⁷² ‘Ongni lucchese balli, canti e giostra; nelle confini in fine a Pietrasanta, e ancora si vanta, il contadin di volerne far ballo, di questo imperio Charlo ch’alla partita ci à diliberati’: Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 201. For the effective extent of the payment and its cancellation on the part of the people of Lucca in 1387, see Meek, *Lucca, 1369–1400*, p. 58.

Poggio, and all the members of the families of the Antelminelli (*omnes de domo Antelminellorum*) could not have access to these offices.⁷³ Freedom was tied to a popular regime of mercantile guidance which aimed to relaunch commercial and banking activities through vigorous expansion in Continental Europe, as confirmed by the fortune of families such as the Rapondi, the Guinigi, the Arnolfini, and the Cenami, two representatives of which (the very rich banker of many princes and dukes from beyond the Alps, Giovanni Arnolfini, and his wife Giovanna Cenami) are portrayed in 1434 by Jan van Eyck (1390–1441) dressed in magnificent garb inside their residence in Bruges in Flanders.⁷⁴

Still, in Lucca the theme of *libertas* was tied to that of the internal harmony of the citizens, guided by what were known as the curators of liberty (*conservatores libertatis*), a magistracy created in 1374 in order to provide for the preservation of the city's freedom along with its peaceful and good state.⁷⁵ The defence of freedom later found an ulterior moment of consolidation in 1390 when, in fear of falling under other foreign powers, the Lucchesi strengthened the power of the Elders by writing the *Ordines super tasca*, which underlined how those eligible for election to the group of Elders (the executive organ of the republic) must always keep watch over the common good by guaranteeing harmony and liberty to the citizenry.⁷⁶ The theme of republican freedom was again repropounded in Lucca following the conspiracy backed by Pietro Cenami on the night between 14 and 15 August in 1430, when the *signoria* of Paolo Guinigi (1372–1432) was deposed.⁷⁷ The Reforms (*Riformagioni*) of the new Republic were opened by the civic councils on 16 August of the following year, signaling the return to a condition of freedom for the citizenry of Lucca.⁷⁸ Thus, even if,

⁷³ Polica, 'Famiglie del ceto dirigente lucchese', p. 361.

⁷⁴ Carroll, 'In the Name of God and Profit'. On the economic expansion of people from Lucca in Continental Europe, see Molà, *La comunità dei lucchesi a Venezia*.

⁷⁵ 'Ad conservandum libertatem civitatis Lucane et pacificum et bonum statum ipsius': quoted in Meek, *Lucca, 1369–1400*, p. 237.

⁷⁶ 'Et desi certissimo che le voci de nostri dolori passarono a dio la cui pieta opera da non potere extimare humana ma divina a la libertà nostra e così e da credere che li fu di piacere mettere ne cuori de cittadini unione e concordia e tale ordine prendere ne loro regimento che seguisseno la conservazione tale quale egli avea donato libertà': quoted in Meek, *Lucca, 1369–1400*, p. 371.

⁷⁷ On the *signoria* of Paolo Guinigi and its effect on the internal politics of Lucca, above all from an administrative perspective, and its effect on foreign policy, especially for having positioned Lucca in the circle of the Visconti alliances in an anti-Florentine stance, see Lazzareschi, 'Il tesoro di Paolo Guinigi', and Mancini, *Storia di Lucca*, pp. 177–97.

⁷⁸ 'Ad statum pacificum dulcissimae libertatis redacta [est] civitas': Archivio di Stato di

in fact, Paolo Guinigi strove to insert Lucca into the sphere of the clearly anti-Florentine Visconti alliances and onto the stage of political relations between the Italian states of the Renaissance, he was perceived as the one who suppressed the Elders, the officials who for decades held the title of imperial vicars, and as the one who instituted a Council of State made up of his most faithful friends, which thereby undermined the republican identity of the city.⁷⁹ In fact, in 1413 the mediation conducted by Guinigi between Genoa and Emperor Sigismondo earned him the status of imperial vicar for the State of Lucca, a nomination that for decades had been reserved for the Elders and was synonymous with political independence and freedom. Specularly, the restored republic progressively limited access to public offices. Following the loss in 1436 of Pietrasanta to Genoa, the traditional oligarchy created a new magistracy of extremely limited composition entrusted with the fate of the Republic during moments of great peril. In order to guarantee independence from eventual foreign powers, and therefore also civil liberty, on 13 November 1436, the general council installed a special executive commission (*balia*) of eight magistrates nominated to relieve officials of the commune deemed incapable or suspect from their duties.⁸⁰ These eight officials had the task of preserving and consolidating the freedom and the peaceful state of the city.⁸¹ These resolutions, which gravitated around the idea of preventing occupation by foreign powers, restricted access

Lucca, *Comune. Minute di Riformagioni*, 10 (without pagination), quoted in Polica, 'Famiglie del ceto dirigente lucchese', p. 355.

⁷⁹ Giovanni Sercambi, the well-known chronicler and short-story writer, member of a family of the *popolo*, was the decisive organizer of Paolo Guinigi's conquest of governing authority in October 1400. As Gonfalonier of Justice in the September to October bimester of 1400, Sercambi showed a remarkable political skill supporting the *balia* that conferred upon Paolo Guinigi the title of Captain and Defender of the People. In addition to this, Sercambi contributed to make useless the attempts to return to town of the exiles supported in Florence. This contribution would earn the chronicler and politician the consideration of the new *signore* as his trustworthy counselor. Sercambi's acquaintance of Paolo Guinigi would facilitate his activity as a spice-seller (*speziale*) and stationer (*cartolaio*), thus obtaining a life pension, even if he were then to be removed from city politics: Meek, 'Il tempo di Giovanni Sercambi', pp. 27–30.

⁸⁰ Archivio di Stato di Lucca, *Riformagioni*, 62, c. 27.

⁸¹ 'Octo super balia pro conservatione et augmentatione libertatis et pacifici et popularis status Lucane civitatis': Archivio di Stato di Lucca, *Otto sulla conservazione della Libertà*, 1, c. 9 (modern numeration). The Eight intervened in fiscal affairs and food rations; they emanated ironclad laws of police control; they elected officials; they issued bans, with which they could even prohibit written communication between Lucchesi and foreigners; in certain situations, they could even set the price of agricultural products. Polica, 'Famiglie del ceto dirigente lucchese', p. 366.

to public offices to the point of oligarchy, thereby corroding the meaning of liberty in terms of political participation. In any case, they contributed to the multiplication of slogans for proclaiming political independence and civic liberties, even attracting the attention of illustrious personalities such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), the British philosopher who during his visit to the city noted:

There is written on the turrets of the city of Lucca in great characters at this day, the word *LIBERTAS*; yet no man can thence infer that a particular man has more liberty or immunity from the service of the Commonwealth there than in Constantinople. Whether a Commonwealth be monarchical or popular, the freedom is still the same.⁸²

In the course of the *Trecento*, the theme of liberty entered into the language of foreign politics of many civic realities in expansion. One such example is Siena, where the concern for the widening of Florentine power over the territory favoured the alliance with the government of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, head of the Duchy of Milan. Here, the theme of liberty, which is addressed in many civic chronicles, was associated with the concern over a Florentine conquest of the city itself — and also of Lucca — which would allow Florence to threaten the Sienese independence in the region from even closer range, with the risk therefore that only ‘Siena itself would remain free’.⁸³ Since the great economic boom of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the slogans tied to *libertas* were at the foundation of the strength and vitality of Siena, and they reemerged following the Florentine conquest of Pisa in 1406, consolidating themselves in a heated anti-Florentine attitude which was stoked ideologically by the theme of the republic’s independence. Embodying this position was a group of citizens united around Antonio Petrucci (1400–71), the Sienese military leader who, in 1430, together with Francesco Sforza, provoked the removal of Paolo Guinigi as *signore* of Lucca.⁸⁴ Antonio, a member of a family that recently became important because of wealth and prestige, and a prominent political leader in the Siena of wealthy merchants, favoured the restarting of Ghibelline and imperial themes in the city. These themes were at that moment present in the iconography and in the official representations (such as in literature), beginning with the renewed myth of Montaperti or of the humanistic celebration of *etrusca libertas*. The relaunching of such themes is evident when we con-

⁸² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. by Gaskin, cap. XXI, p. 143.

⁸³ ‘Lo rimarebe Siena libara’: Montauri, ‘Cronaca senese’, bk xv, pt 6, p. 814.

⁸⁴ Pertici, ‘Il capitano e uomo politico senese Antonio Petrucci’, p. 209.

sider that the imperial eagle was painted on the facade of Palazzo Pubblico in 1432 to communicate to the citizenry the city's membership in the Holy Roman Empire, a membership only in name but which must have confirmed to the Sieneſe an openly anti-Florentine, Ghibelline tradition.⁸⁵

Order, Peace, Unity: The Prince Before 'The Prince'

The internal lacerations fuelled by the factional struggles show the weak ſide of the Italian communes, many of which, with the exception of Florence, Siena, Genoa, Lucca and Venice, were replaced by the middle of the thirteenth century by ſeignorial regimes that adopted the themes of order, peace, and unity as the prevalent form of political communication in oppoſition to thoſe tied to civic freedoms. In following the riſe of the Della Torre family in Milan, of the Scotti family in Piacenza, of the Beccaria family in Pavia, of the Bonacolsi family in Mantua, and of the Della Scala family in Verona, it was clear that the political power of the *ſignore* was oppoſed to that of the communal government, no longer in terms of the negation of civic liberties but inſtead as the inevitable ſolution to political inſtability. The *ſignore* became the ruler who brought peace and unity to the city overwhelmed by internal diſcord and fighting between factions; he was an illuminated authority capable of reſtoring juſtice and the common good. The virtues tied to the world of labour were ſubſtituted with praiſe for the prince and with the moral precepts to which the prince himſelf muſt have adhered. If in the communal age the divine nature of power was expreſſed in the community of citizens, ſince the end of the *Duecento* the role of the prince began to tie itſelf indiſſolubly to its double nature, earthly and divine, and to embody both the cardinal virtues (prudence, juſtice, fortitude, temperance) and the theological ones (faith, hope, charity, love).⁸⁶

The anonymous author of the *Oculus pastoralis*, the reference manual for any aspiring *podestà* of the communal age, informs us that a community can become great only through order, peace, and unity, and that power muſt relate with the oppoſing factions by warning them that only ſocial tranquillity, peace, and unity allows the city to grow.⁸⁷ The problem of the attainment of order, peace, and civic unity was felt by Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), probably as a

⁸⁵ Shaw, 'Memory and Tradition in Sieneſe Political Life', p. 222.

⁸⁶ Bejczy, 'The Concept of Political Virtue in the Thirteenth Century'.

⁸⁷ 'Per quietam autem tranquillitatem et pacem [...] excrescit civitas': 'Oculus pastoralis', ed. by Franceschi, p. 27.

consequence of his sojourn in Paris under the Capetian kings. A theorist of scholastic philosophy raised in southern Italy under one of the most centralized European governments, Thomas affirms in an Aristotelian perspective that monarchy is the best form of government, the only form in which the political community can find social peace. The government of one person is therefore more useful with respect to the government of the many because the objective of every leader is that of preserving the peace in the same way the helmsman protects the ship from the dangers of the sea in order to guide it safely into port.⁸⁸ The risk is that the monarchist government degenerates into tyranny just like the republican government can degenerate into civil discord, as demonstrated by the republican period of ancient Rome. It is therefore always more advantageous to live under a king rather than under a republican regime because the government by many, Thomas concludes in his *De regimine principum ad regnum Cypri*, is by its own nature corruptible.⁸⁹

Brunetto Latini admonishes in his *Rettorica* that harmony is an indispensable and necessary element for social cohesion,⁹⁰ while Dante, through the words of the same Latini, underlines that human greed is always a threat and puts political stability in danger because it is endemic to the situation in which there are two opposing sides ready to exercise supremacy on the community as a whole: 'one party and the other shall be hungry'.⁹¹ These same arguments are addressed by intellectuals charged with writing the official missives for the various chancellors' offices (*dictatores*) in the Italian idiom. Matteo de' Libri (1214–75) strictly associates the government of those cities who promise to their communities to maintain the social peace (*permanere in gran tranquillitate*) with the achievement of the common good (*honor et bom stato*).⁹² In 1317, a counselor of Matteo Visconti praised his master to the papal legates as promoter and creator of the peace, guarantor of justice and mercy,⁹³ in the same way in which Ferreto de' Ferreti (1297?–1337) would later glorify the seigno-

⁸⁸ Aquinas, *De regimine principum ad regnum Cypri*, ed. by Mathis, bk I, chap. 2, pp. 8–9.

⁸⁹ Aquinas, *De regimine principum ad regnum Cypri*, ed. by Mathis, bk I, chap. 5, pp. 16–17.

⁹⁰ 'Coloro [...] che non vogliono che lite né discordia sia nelle cittadi, e se vi fosse sì la mettono in pace': Latini, *Rettorica*, ed. by Maggini, p. 26.

⁹¹ 'Che l'una parte e l'altra avranno fame': Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Inferno*, xv. 71.

⁹² Matteo de' Libri, *Arringhe*, ed. by Vincenti, pp. 3–227 (p. 79), where the author underlines the importance, for every community of people, 'permanere in gran tranquillitate'.

⁹³ 'Amator et actor paci set sectator iusticie et misericordie': quoted in *Vatikanische Akten zur deutschen Geschichte in der Zeit Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern*, ed. by Von Reizler, p. 25.

rial supremacy of the Della Scala clan in his *Carmen de Scaligerorum origine* of 1328.⁹⁴ The maintenance of the peace by a *signore* is recorded also in Florence by the writer and notary Filippo Ceffi (thirteenth century, c. 1330) who records in his *Dicerie* (presumably written around the year 1325) his hopes, like every good Florentine Guelph, for the protection of Florence by the king Robert of Anjou through the *signoria* of his son Charles.⁹⁵

This line of thought finds its foundations in Giles of Rome (c. 1243–1316),⁹⁶ who identifies the attainment of the common good with recognizing the superiority of the monarchist system over that of the *popolo* in his treatise *De regimine principum*, written between 1277 and 1279.⁹⁷ This treatise, conceived for the use of the future king of France, Philip IV the Fair, is translated in various languages and spread throughout Christian Europe. With his divine vision of the prince, Giles of Rome's treatise becomes one of the texts referred to in order to justify the passage from the governments of the *popolo* to those of the *signore*.⁹⁸ In this passage, Giles sketches the image of an ideal prince who through his virtues, passions, and customs reproduces all the elements of the ruler theorized previously by the supporters of communal self-government. The capacity to control passions is one of the primary characteristics of the prince imagined by Giles, such that the good leader, who must be capable of preserving the realm united and peaceful, can be perceived as such only if he is able to keep in check his own craving for power. The virtuous guardian of the laws becomes worthy of his role when he is devoted to God, when he is, therefore, full of charity, because the prince (as defined in terms of Scholastic philosophy) reaches perfection only if he is benevolent; if he acts in order to achieve perennial glory; if he seeks eternal bliss; if he does not seek his own virtuosity, all through political virtues, as in the classical tradition of Cicero. Giles sustains that kings and princes produce political stability only if they guide their people onto the road of happiness, avoiding the search for riches, honours, fame, glory, and power. They must therefore govern according to prudence as guided by the love of

⁹⁴ 'Qui populi rem protegat equis | legibus, ac tumidus procerum declinet honoris': *Le opere di Ferreto de' Ferreti vicentino*, ed. by Cipolla, pp. 29, 30–31.

⁹⁵ 'Acciò che 'l vostro divoto comune della cittade di Firenze si possa reggere in buono e pacifico stato': Ceffi, *Le Dicerie*, ed. by Biondi, p. 5. On Ser Filippo Ceffi, see Palma, 'Ceffi, Filippo'.

⁹⁶ Del Punta, Donati, and Luna, 'Egidio Romano'.

⁹⁷ Quagliani, *Politica e diritto*, pp. 8, and 30, n. 38.

⁹⁸ Miethke, *Le teorie politiche del Medio Evo*, pp. 94–104.

God.⁹⁹ At the beginning of the *Trecento*, in defence of the power of princes, Enrico da Rimini affirms in his *De quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus* that in order to govern in the name of the common good, the prince must be attended by prudence, a virtue without which the government of the prince degenerates into tyranny. The real problem and the true ruin of cities, writes Enrico, comes about when the prince is greedy and imprudent, when his priorities are aimed at the oppression of his subjects and not toward the common good (*totum humanum et politicum bonum*).¹⁰⁰ The peaceful solution to the continuous conflict that crushes the Italian communes is summarized by Dante Alighieri in his *De monarchia* and in his invocation for the creation of a universal monarchy.¹⁰¹

In the early fourteenth century the difference between a republic and a principality was not perceived as ideologically distinct. A clear example of this is the altarpiece commissioned in 1317 by Robert of Anjou (1278–1343), king of Naples from 1309 to 1343, which is currently preserved at the National Museum of Capodimonte in Naples. Executed by Simone Martini (c. 1284–1344), the work, known as the *Saint Louis of Toulouse Crowning Robert of Anjou* (*San Ludovico da Tolosa incorona Roberto d'Angiò*), is a manifesto of political propaganda which contains the political intentions of the Anjou family for the Kingdom of Naples. The Anjou family turned to one of the best 'republican' artists of the time so that in his work he could glorify the good government produced by their dynasty. Robert commissioned Simone Martini to create a picture aimed at portraying the canonization of his brother, Louis (1274–97), a Franciscan friar and bishop of Toulouse, that represented him seated with a gold background while two angels crown him to signify his sanctification. Given that in 1296 Louis renounced his rights of succession of the kingdom in his younger brother Robert's favour, the primary objective of the painting was that of emphasizing the crowning of Robert as king of Sicily by his brother and of glorifying his political capabilities. The painting by Simone Martini was to legitimize the reign of Robert, the third Angevin king after Charles I and Charles II, who, through this visual representation — in which the king is portrayed kneeling with his hands together in prayer, in a smaller scale compared to the saint given his human condition —, must project an image of himself as

⁹⁹ 'Reges ergo et principes [...] est dirigere alios ad bene vivere [...] quod civitas domus est aliquo modo communitas prima et quod est naturalis et quod reges et principes et universaliter omnes cives hoc ignorare non debet': Egidio Romano, *De regimine principum*, bk II, chap. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Enrico Da Rimini, *De quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus*, bk I, chap. 3.

¹⁰¹ Sullivan, 'Justice, Temptation, and the Limits of Princely Virtue'.

a religious and devout king. Even the depiction of Louis is evidently the result of a careful political reflection because he, who in reality was close to the spiritual Franciscans (some of whom had been condemned by the Church for the extreme glorification of poverty), is here represented as if he were a bishop in all his majesty. To the usual habit of the order are added the insignias of bishop, and along with the mantle decorated with the fleur-de-lis, symbol of France and of its Angevin dynasty, Louis holds the pastoral staff in his right hand while on his head is placed the mitre. Thus united in a single image with the precise goal of making the memory of the family sacred in the collective imagination are the celebration of the legitimacy of Robert and that of a type of Franciscanism well viewed by the papacy and at the moment allied with the Angevins. Following a parallel path with that of the communes, in which the discussion among coeval intellectuals no longer focused on the achievement of civic liberties as much as it did on the maintenance of them, the Angevin dynasty placed itself at the centre of the southern political picture by spreading and making the sanctity of the entire dynasty resonate through the sainthood of Louis.¹⁰² The words of Francis Petrarch (1304–74) will define Robert of Anjou as a sovereign capable of soothing souls, because ‘if you know how to soothe the savage spirits of horses with caresses | and then, little by little, reduce them to docile behaviour, | and if you are able to bend the capricious birds that are the minds of men | is it perhaps anything less than all peoples submitting themselves only to you?’¹⁰³ Robert, though he never succeeded in subjugating the people of Naples, created, in fact, one of the most advanced European courts of the time, transforming it into one of the most visible cultural centres of the early fourteenth century; it became a political model and a point of reference for all of the Italian peninsula. Furthermore, the continuous interaction between the Republic of Florence and the Kingdom of Naples — the son of Charles was nominated *signore* of Florence just as, several years earlier, Robert had been — favoured the transformation of the Angevin court into an enlightened court of which Robert himself was the main author, cultured and wise. Thus, even Giotto (c. 1267–1337), the highest paid master of the time, moved to the Angevin court

¹⁰² On this, see Wieruszowski, ‘Art and Commune’, and Hoch, ‘The Franciscan Provenance’.

¹⁰³ ‘Se sai ammansire con carezze gli spiriti selvaggi dei cavalli | e poi, a poco a poco, ridurli a comportamenti mansueti, | e se riesci a piegare i volubili uccelli che sono le menti degli uomini | è forse cosa da meno che tutte le genti si sottomettano a te solo?’, Petrarca, *Epigrammi in latino*, ed. by Rico, p. 27. See also ‘Si fera quadrupedum tractando pecora mulces | et potes in mores sensim convertere dulces, | si que — vagas volucres! — humanas flectere mentes, | est minus et cunctas uni tibi subdere gentes?’ (p. 27).

in 1328 and remained there until 1334, certainly attracted by the large circulation of money that the many families of Florentine bankers had produced in the Kingdom of Naples but no less interested in the necessities of the Angevins of commissioning art in order to conquer the consensus of the people.¹⁰⁴

The regime of the prince, the *regimen per paucos* in which the management of power was in the hands of a small number of elites led by a single political figure, placed itself in a clearly antagonistic position to the *regimen ad populum*, where the participation of the citizenry in the management of public affairs was increasingly limited by the progressive rise of wealthy merchants. At the outset of the *Trecento*, the voices of consensus were raised in the name of the common good in favour of the strongest powers even in Florence, just like in Lucca, along with the first among the most consolidated republican systems of the Italian peninsula. The Lucchese Pietro de' Faitinelli (c. 1280–1349), forced into exile for belonging to the Black Guelphs following the victory that the White Guelphs (1314) obtained thanks to the support of Ugucione della Faggiuola (1250–1319) and Castruccio Castracani (1281–1328), recognized the superiority of the tyrant with respect to the impact of the presence and the power of the *popolo* in the life of his city. The Black Guelph notary from the city of the Serchio river believed that the civic trades were at fault for having emanated a statute — that of 1308 — in which the functions of the civic *podestà* were overturned. The *podestà* was now obligated to swear on the statute of the consuls and the merchants, thereby exposing himself in guaranteeing the observance of those rights that only the trades controlled from within the activities of government.¹⁰⁵

As we have seen, Filippo Ceffi invited his fellow citizens to ask the king, Robert of Anjou, to send his son, Charles of Calabria, to the city as *signore*.¹⁰⁶ But caution was necessary because the arguments used in the models of discourse by Ceffi were still an expression of the Florentine *popolo*. The rhetorical flair present in the erudite and frequent quotes of biblical and classical character utilized by the notary made, in fact, his political position show through,

¹⁰⁴ On the historic background, see De Frede, 'Da Carlo I d'Angiò a Giovanna I (1263–1382)'; on the architecture of this period, see Bruzelius, *Le pietre di Napoli*, pp. 151–75.

¹⁰⁵ Pietro de' Faitinelli, 'Sonetti', ed. by Massera, I, 191. On this, see Manselli, *La Repubblica di Lucca*, pp. 58–59, and Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 71–147.

¹⁰⁶ He is perceived as a charismatic figure comparable to 'quello Orfeo che farae dormire l'agnello sicuro allato del lupo: e'l timido cervio non averae paura dinanzi al superbo leone', a political figure capable not only of maintaining civic liberties but also of 'abatterae superbia, e caccierae tirannia': Ceffi, *Le Dicerie*, ed. by Biondi, p. 16.

probably in sync with that of every good Florentine Guelph who lived in the city at the beginning of the fourteenth century: he was increasingly less interested in the form of government and ever more interested in social peace, a necessary condition for trade and economic growth. This was why Ceffi, sustaining that the conservation of freedom did not depend on the maintenance of a self-governed republic but on the promotion of the common good, suggested to the rulers of his own city that they subjugate themselves to Charles, a foreign *signore*.¹⁰⁷

Similar sentiments were expressed by Francis Petrarch, whose attitude was certainly aimed at defending the positive effects of autocratic governments. Indications of this can be found in Petrarch's *Seniles*, elaborated in 1346, expanded in 1353, and concluded in 1366. Petrarch writes

I hope to not learn to serve as an old man, and to preserve in any circumstance my freedom of spirit, even if regarding the body and other things it is necessary to be subjects of the powerful, be it one person as in my case or many people as in yours. And of the two, I would not know which yoke is heavier and more bothersome to bear: but I believe that bearing the tyranny of one man alone is easier than bearing that of a whole *popolo*.¹⁰⁸

In full harmony with these declarations, the lords of Padua — of the Da Carrara family — were defined leaders of the homeland and not tyrants (*rectores patrie, non tyranni*). When Francesco Novelli, the last *signore* of the city, lost an unfair fight for the survival of the Da Carrara supremacy, the humanist and chancellor Giovanni Conversini (1348–1408) did not hesitate to underline the superiority of the contemplative life in his *Dragmalogia de eligibili vitae genere*. He explains how only a political order constructed and protected by a prince can procure that freedom which makes the serene pursuit of the *studia litterarum* possible.¹⁰⁹ The superiority of the *signoria* over republican government, con-

¹⁰⁷ 'Per asprezza di guerra e per maladetta discordia siamo condotti a donare altrui la nostra libertate e giustizia, la quale avemo posseduta per molti anni': Ceffi, *Le Dicerie*, ed. by Biondi, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ 'Spero fore ne discam servire senex utque ubilibet animo liber sim, etsi corpore rebusque aliis subesse maioribus sit necesse, sive uni ut ego, sive multis ut tu. Quod nescio an gravius molestiusque iugi genus dixerim: pati hominem credo facilius quam tyrannum populum': Petrarca, *Seniles*, ed. by Fracassetti, VI, 2, vol. 1, p. 416. See also the Petrarca's *Epistolae familiares*: 'quamlibet tyrannum vocent verissimi omnium tyranni, qui se patres patrie dici volunt': Petrarca, *Familiarum Rerum Libri*, III, 7.3, p. 351. On this, see De Mattei, *Il sentimento politico del Petrarca*, p. 73, and Rubinstein, 'Le dottrine politiche nel Rinascimento', p. 218.

¹⁰⁹ On these examples, see Rubinstein, 'A Grammar Teacher's Autobiography'.

tinues Conversini, is preferable even in the case in which the *signore* is only somewhat good.¹¹⁰

The sources from the cities of the centre-north of Italy, where the phenomenon of the rise of the *signorie* was effectively achieved earlier than elsewhere, associated the idea of tyranny with that of social peace.¹¹¹ The Tuscan cities, the backdrop onto which the notion of tyranny was projected, were composed of the same elements of peace and freedom: the factors were, however, inverted, as demonstrated by the frescoes of Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the town hall of Siena, in which the concept of tyranny is contrasted with the idea of justice and thus with the idea of common good.¹¹² Giovanni Villani condemned tyranny not as an expression of a form of government but as incapable of negotiating the common good. Even for the Florentine Guelph chronicler the equivalence of *signore* and tyrant was not at all automatic, but it was instead the effect of the incapacity to guarantee the civic *libertates* and the independence of the communal systems. The extraordinary capacity to understand the reality of his time permitted Villani to give a negative judgement regarding Uguccione della Faggiuola in March of 1316 based on the fact that the *signore* wanted to dominate unchecked as a tyrant.¹¹³

In Milan in 1349, the Major Council enacted a law on the hereditary transmission of the *signoria* in regards to the male progeny of Matteo Visconti.¹¹⁴ The duchy of Filippo Maria Visconti (1412–47) accomplished the project of political centralization by promoting his own authority over the territories, rendering the image of the sovereign-monarch sacred, untouchable, and incomparable with respect to the stature of the common man. This allowed the Milanese duchy to divide up lands, castles, and villages dependent on the *contado* of the cities and to subordinate the powerful elements of the state to himself in order to transform them from vassals into subjects. The policies of the Visconti, in terms of territory, reintroduced the feudal system, giving life to forms of dependence based on vassalage and on impersonal subordination

¹¹⁰ 'Unius non modo optimi [...] sed mediocriter boni eligibilis est regimen': quoted in Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, II, 490; on this, see Rubinstein, 'Le dottrine politiche nel Rinascimento', p. 219.

¹¹¹ On the idea of tyranny and on its evolution over time, see Forhan, 'Salisbury Stakes'.

¹¹² Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 136–210.

¹¹³ 'Come tiranno al tutto dominare sanza contasto': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk X, chap. 75.

¹¹⁴ Defined in the sources as 'verus et legitimus et naturalis dominus': Collodo, 'Governanti e governati', p. 96.

to the territorial and public authorities of the duke. Already in the fourteenth century the duchy introduced this typology of relationships aimed at the affirmation of the supremacy of his own rulers in the territories; and in May of 1351, the first year of the *signoria* of Archbishop Giovanni Visconti of Milan over Bologna, Giovanni da Parma painted the emblems of the Visconti family in the town hall of the city.¹¹⁵

When the Visconti family conquered new territories, it imposed the diffusion of their crest in the highly visible spaces of the public life of the subjected towns and cities, obligating their newly acquired properties to mint coins with their images and to affix their seal on ordinary documentation.¹¹⁶ With a precise reference to imperial Rome and to the means of affirming absolute power over vast territory, the subjugation of new populations induced the new Milanese leaders to mint and distribute medals with their effigies.¹¹⁷ The Visconti rulers utilized a form of political communication intended to underline the supremacy of their regime over the subjugated cities and to guarantee the common good for these urban centres.¹¹⁸ When they imposed their will on Bologna, the Visconti rulers insisted upon communicating their supremacy over the Pepoli family to the population by extending their own power over a local tradition rooted in the world of the commune: Milan prohibited all the Bolognese from painting their own family coat-of-arms on the outside of houses, establishing a sanction of 500 lire for those who violated this law and mandated the covering up of the painting itself within three days.¹¹⁹

This new way of presenting the role of the prince — who never ceased to negotiate the consensus of the various political and territorial bodies that constituted his power base — must be framed within the wider mosaic of the construction of the territorial state of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In order to strengthen his control over the *territorium*, Filippo Maria Visconti assimilated jurists and chancellors into his service and attempted to persuade

¹¹⁵ Bologna was sold by the sons of Taddeo Pepoli to Giovanni Visconti at the end of October 1350: this gave life to a *signoria* that lasted until his death in April 1354; Giovanni was succeeded by his nephew, Matthew, from whom the city was taken by force in 1355 by Giovanni Visconti da Oleggio, a Visconti belonging to a collateral branch of the family: he proclaimed himself *signore* of the city and governed it until 1360, the year in which the city returned under the direct control of the Church: Lorenzoni, *Conquistare e governare la città*.

¹¹⁶ Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan*, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy*, p. 166.

¹¹⁸ Cengarle, 'Le arenghe dei decreti viscontei'.

¹¹⁹ Pini, *Il mondo dei pittori a Bologna*, p. 102.

the subjected communities through a program of political promotion directed toward their aggregation.¹²⁰ The symbols of liberty reemerged as accessories in 1447 following the duke's death when the Ambrosian republic was founded at the will of a group of nobles and jurists of the University of Pavia. Guided by twenty-four 'captains and defenders of the freedoms of the illustrious and excellent city of Milan' (*capitani e difensori della libertà della illustre ed eccelsa città di Milano*), the republic had a short life because of the conquest attempts by neighbouring states, first of all Venice: in fact, the appeal to Francesco Sforza with anti-Venetian emphasis led the Ambrosian republic towards a new *signoria* with the same Sforza as duke beginning in 1450.¹²¹

In Foligno, the *signoria* of the Trinci family was on a road similar to that of the Milanese *signoria*. The noble family's residence in the city revealed an extraordinary profusion of frescoes that followed an iconographic program with a lay subject aimed at the legitimization of the ruler as the dispenser of the common good and of good government. Up until Ugolino, who in 1386 succeeded his Uncle Corrado (1377–86) in the government of the city, the *signoria* of the Trinci clan over the city of Foligno maintained a very informal character. It was with Ugolino himself that the ruler became the holder of absolute power, a personality of semi-divine origin enveloped by an aura of the sacred, a philosopher educated on the mysteries of the universe, and therefore capable of governing by following the precepts of science and reason. The frescoes aimed to spread the image of the ruler surrounded by intellectuals, poets, and literary figures and as propogator of the common good. The iconographic program piloted by Gentile da Fabriano was carefully planned by a small group of humanists very close to the prince and then translated into images by the artists in the form of sketches and drawings. Among the literary figures connected to the ruler of Foligno, two enjoy a fame that greatly exceeds the limits of the small state, and it was in all probability to them that Ugolino turned in order to define the subjects of the complex pictorial decoration with which he intended to adorn the halls of his palace. The first is the bishop of Foligno, Federico Frizzi, author of *Quadriregio*, an allegorical poem dedicated to Ugolino himself: the second is Francesco da Fiano, an exponent of the old rhetorical school in Italy, highly esteemed by humanists such as Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, and Pietro Paolo Vergerio. Francesco da Fiano is the author of twenty inscriptions (*tituli*)

¹²⁰ Cengarle, *Immagine di potere e prassi di governo*, pp. 109–28.

¹²¹ On the Golden Ambrosian Republic, see Resti, 'Documenti per la storia della Repubblica Ambrosiana', and Resti, *L'Aurea Repubblica Ambrosiana*. On the return to the use of symbols typical of the communal age, see Somaini, 'Il binomio imperfetto'.

arranged under the depictions of the Famous Men that decorated the walls of the Hall of the Emperors. The verses composed by Francesco da Fiano to identify each of the twenty Famous Men (renamed 'Giants' because of their colossal dimensions) and to evoke their legendary exploits are not the only writings inserted into the pictorial decoration of the halls of the second floor. Each figure, scene, or historical episode represented on the walls of the Trinci palace recalls an intricate connection of meanings that the visitor would not ever be able to understand without at least minimal explicative assistance, which is provided by the numerous inscriptions inserted in the paintings. Composed by the literary figures, who were also the authors of the iconographic program, these texts then passed into the hands of the artists who completed the decoration.¹²²

The idea that men were naturally organized since the beginning following preferably monarchic forms of government finds its greatest expression in the course of the *Quattrocento* in the works of the Sienese humanist Francesco Patrizi (1413–92). Dedicating his *De Republica* to Pope Sixtus IV and to the Republic of Siena, Patrizi makes use of the metaphor of the bees. Already used by Petrarch, this metaphor invites the intellectual to go from ancient text to ancient text like the bee goes from flower to flower, because only through the study of these texts can one absorb, and therefore 'sip', the truth. According to Patrizi, the intellectual must draw freely from the texts because both in the republican authors and in those from the imperial age, it is still possible to find ideas of great value. According to a widespread belief among the humanist authors, even for Patrizi knowledge does not change over time and derives entirely from the classical culture of ancient Greece: in particular, from Homer. Quintilian's image of Homer as the origin of knowledge as well as the idea of the perennial 'repetitiveness' of culture in every age are concepts that are generally well established in the humanistic age. In the first chapter of Book I, Patrizi asks himself which is better: a republican regime or rule by a single prince (*Praestantione sit respublica an unius principis imperium*). The theoretical framework of the problem, with reference to the *praestantia* of one system of government with respect to another, clearly recalls a theme that had enlivened the humanistic political writings of the first part of the fifteenth century: the discussion revolving around the *praestantia* of Scipione, or Caesar. Patrizi resumes the discussion of the terms of that problem in connection with evidence but exceeds the limits in which it had been parochially circumscribed by Poggio Bracciolini and by Guarino. No longer under discussion is the greatness

¹²² On the pictorial decorations of the Trinci Palace, see Salmi, 'Gli affreschi di Palazzo Trinci a Foligno'; and Galassi, *Il Palazzo Trinci di Foligno*.

of one historical personality with respect to another (and, secretly, the praise of one modern man with respect to another: Cosimo the Elder by Poggio, Leonello d'Este by Guarino), but instead the following general question is addressed: which is preferable, a monarchy or a republic? In the *De republica*, although openly opting for civic institutions, Patrizi does not express a refusal of a monarchist government. A monarchy seems to him rather more natural: not only because it imitates the organization of the universe, governed by a single God (an argument that circulated in the time of Salutati), but above all because it corresponds to the primitive organization of men, who from the beginning have had the tendency to unite in coalition under the guidance of the strongest and the most capable. This tendency, however, observes Patrizi evoking Sallust, and clashes with the unavoidable human inclination towards corruption, since the first excellent kings are succeeded by poorer ones, who inevitably make progress toward republican institutions a necessary reality. Patrizi, through his own reasoning and, above all, through his sources, supports the stages of the historic process that he is describing: in opening, he shows his adherence with conviction to the ideas of Xenophon, who in his *Cyropaedia* clarifies his preference for the principality over a republic, even if well constructed; in following, on the contrary, he refers to the motto of a court jester of the imperial age — a motto taken from the *Historia Augusta* and precedently evoked in the *De infelicitate principum* by Poggio Bracciolini — who sustains that the names of good princes are so few that they can all be written on the inside a single ring. According to Patrizi, a theoretically better condition cannot be imagined for mankind than that of being lead by a good monarch. Given, however, the rarity of this condition, ever so fleeting because of the brevity of human life, it is legitimate to prefer a republic over a monarchy, since a republic provides greater guarantees of fairness and durability. With the exception of the case of Venice, the ruling classes of the majority of the Italian republics (Florence, Siena, Genoa, Lucca) were not members of an inherited elite but a direct expression of political power. Venice, as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) demonstrates, contaminated the idea of a republic with that of a principality in the perception of contemporaries. In the second chapter of the first book of his *Discorsi*, the Florentine chancellor underlines how the cities, by their own discretion, can be governed in the same way either as republics or as principalities.¹²³ Convinced that the possible forms of govern-

¹²³ 'Nacquono queste variazioni de' governi a caso intra gli uomini: perché nel principio del mondo, rendo gli abitatori radi, vissono un tempo dispersi, a similitudine delle bestie; dipoi, moltiplicando la generazione, si ragunarono insieme, e per potersi meglio difendere cominci-

ment are monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy (which, in reality, become six, since for each one exists its possible degeneration), Machiavelli considers the death of good princes to be most harmful for every state. In this context, the Florentine intellectual affirms that a realm is destined to crumble as soon as the virtue of the prince (or princes) that leads it fails, and therefore the most fragile realms are those that depend upon the virtue of a single man. On the contrary, the best prince is not he who governs with wisdom, but he who organizes the city in such a way that, after his death, 'it may continue to maintain itself'.¹²⁴

The synthesis of these themes is found in the works of Aristotle, which return to the centre of the discussion between intellectuals at the moment of the progressive rise of the Medici family in the Florentine Republic; that is, in a system which at that point hangs in the balance between republican culture and seignorial assertion. The works of the Greek philosopher were, in fact, spread throughout Florence by the will of Cosimo the Elder, who in 1455 formally appointed Giovanni Argiropulo to teach Greek in the Florentine studio. The Byzantine scholar began his lessons utilizing *Nichomachean Ethics*, and between 1457 and 1458 he received an ulterior appointment for a Latin translation of the same work. The fact that, in 1463, he asked Bartolomeo Scala to read it for him and Donato Acciaiuoli, a pupil of Argiropulo, to comment on it

arono a riguardare infra loro quello che fusse più robusto e di maggiore cuore, e fecionlo come capo, e lo ubidivano. Da questo nacque la cognizione delle cose oneste e buone, differenti dalle perniziose e ree: perché, veggendo che, se uno noceva al suo beneficatore, ne veniva odio e compassione intra gli uomini, biasimando gl'ingrati ed onorando quelli che fussero grati, e pensando ancora che quelle medesime ingiurie potevano essere fatte a loro; per fuggire simile male si riducevano a fare leggi, ordinare punizioni a chi contrafacessi: donde venne la cognizione della giustizia. La quale cosa faceva che, avendo dipoi a eleggere uno principe, non andavano dietro al più gagliardo, ma a quello che fusse più prudente e più giusto. Ma come dipoi si cominciò a fare il principe per successione, e non per elezione, subito cominciarono li eredi a degenerare dai loro antichi [...]: in modo che, cominciando il principe a essere odiato e per tale odio a temere, e passando tosto dal timore all'offese, ne nasceva presto una tirannide. Da questo nacquero i principii delle rovine e delle conspirazioni e congiure contro a' principi, non fatte da coloro che fussono o timidi o deboli, ma da coloro che, per generosità, grandezza d'animo, ricchezza e nobiltà avanzavano gli altri [...]. Venuta dipoi questa amministrazione ai loro figliuoli [...], feciono che d'uno governo d'Ottimati diventassi uno governo di pochi, senza avere rispetto ad alcuna civiltà; talché in breve tempo intervenne loro come al tiranno; perché, infastidita da' loro governi, la moltitudine si fe' ministra di qualunque disegnassi in alcun modo offendere quegli governatori: e così si levò presto alcuno che, con l'aiuto della moltitudine, li spense': Machiavelli, 'Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio', ed. by Martelli, bk 1, chap. 2, pp. 79–80.

¹²⁴ 'Ancora la si mantenga': Machiavelli, 'Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio', ed. by Martelli, bk 1, chap. 11, p. 94.

for him demonstrates how much Cosimo was interested in the *Ethics*: between the end of 1463 and the first few months of 1464, Donato Acciaiuoli dedicated the translation of the *Nichomachean Ethics* to the Florentine banker, who legitimized himself through the diffusion of the words of Aristotle. Interpreting the Greek philosopher, in fact, Cosimo wanted to promote his message according to which the idea of the common good, and therefore of good government, could be born even from governments held up by *signori* who practised magnificence. Publicizing it among Florentine intellectuals of the early fifteenth century, Cosimo utilized the philosophical, ethical, and aesthetical theory of the *megaloprépeia* promoted by Aristotle in the fourth book of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, according to which the ethical virtue of the great expense is associated with the good ruler. The sovereign becomes magnificent when he has the capacity to know and appreciate the beautiful, for which the magnificence, having to do with good aesthetical taste, becomes a point of contact between aesthetics and business, between sense of the beautiful, and, evidently, common good. Naturally, this argument holds provided that it does not degenerate into tyranny, which for Aristotle is the worst of the political expressions produced by man.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Etica Nicomachea*, ed. by Natali, bk IV, para. 2, pp. 127–31. On these themes, see Polcri, ‘Teoria e prassi’.

THE SPACES OF POWER

The Manufacture of Consensus

At the political centre of every society, there is a group of elites which governs and a system of symbolic forms that represents it. The members that make up the ruling class, in fact, justify their role and order their actions by making reference to a patrimony of history, ceremonies, signs, formalities, and accessories, either inherited or completely fabricated. Political power distinguishes itself as such at the moment in which the inhabitants of a given community confer their recognition upon it. Naturally, this is evident both in republican political systems, where the innate tendency of men to anthropomorphize power places power itself at the centre of the cult, and in seignorial political forms, where the concentration on the figure of the ruler and the explicit creation of a cult around him make the symbolic character of domination tangible. The official ceremonies, such as the election of priors or the coronation of the *signore*, establish the centre of society and affirm their relationship with transcendental concepts, stamping the ritual signs of predominance onto the territory. When the sovereigns present themselves to their subjects in public ceremonies, writes the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, 'they mark their territory like wolves or tigers who emit their odor in all of their territory, almost as if it were a physical part of themselves'.¹

¹ Geertz, *Antropologia interpretativa*, pp. 153–85 (quotation at p. 158). On this topic, see Willentz, *Rites of Power*; Bertelli, *Il corpo del re*; Fantoni, *Il potere dello spazio*; and Fantoni, *I*

In his discussion of 'medieval political theology', Ernst Kantorowicz outlines the hardships of regal charisma in the history of the Western world over more than two centuries, and he highlights the symbolic aspects of power, demonstrating how rulers and their political practices must be perceived by subjects as sacred inasmuch as they represent the idea of universality.² And it is exactly through the symbolic aspect of power that political harmony is obtained in every epoch and in every society. This harmony is a necessary condition for any conception of the state as an organism capable of transforming multiplicity into unity. Unity is obtained through the celebration of political ritual, an instrument through which tensions can be masked and greater political harmony can be propagated. Observing the harmony expressed in the rituals of power, Geertz develops the concept of the theatre-state, whose dramas, 'mimetic of themselves, were, in the end, neither illusions nor lies, neither sleight of hand nor make believe. They were what there was'.³

Geertz's theory of the theatre-state is born from the intuition that the ritual does not so much imitate social reality as much as it interprets it and defines its trajectory through repetition. By means of its repetition, the ceremony creates the idea of the state as something that transcends the single individuals that govern it. The peculiarity of the rite is the repetition of the gestures, a feature that distinguishes it from spontaneous behaviour. It is in this way that the repetition of the ritual determines the constitution of power. This means that the ceremonies serve both as a model of society, that is, as a representation of the existing situation, and as a model for society, that is, as an instruction manual for how the state should be constructed. The ritual highlights the separation between the established order of a state and its subjects, and it defines the relationships between the governors and the governed. The ceremonies are 'constituents', in that their celebration creates a unitary ritual structure for the state in the moment in which the written laws, the statutes, must be commonly accepted, and in the moment in which these same laws must be renewed. For this reason, the state — whether its dimensions are civic or territorial, republican, or seignorial — 'is "invisible"'; as Michael Walzer writes, 'it must be

gesti del potere. On the ritual of power, see Turner, *The Ritual Process*; Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private*; Schmitt, *Il gesto nel Medioevo*; Miglio and Lombardi, *Simbolo e realtà della vita urbana nel tardo Medioevo*; Chiffolleau, Martines, and Bagliani, *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali*; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*; Castano, Latella, and Sorrenti, *Comunicazione e propaganda*; Cohn and others, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Ritual*.

² Kantorowicz, *I due corpi del re*.

³ Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State*, p. 136.

personified before it can be seen, symbolized before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived'.⁴

From the second half of the thirteenth century forward, the communal ordinances of central and northern Italy were gradually transformed into forms of territorial domination, and they put into place a series of practices and strategies at the imaginative level with the goal of achieving political consensus by the ruling class over their subjects. The urban space was remodelled in order to become the image of a shared set of signs and the testimony of a complex history of political and social change acquired over time. The *civitas* identified the spaces to share within its own walls, in which the community symbolically expressed its political, religious, and economic identity. The inheritance of the preceding centuries was changed by reformulating the urban space, utilizing monumental episodes and artistic moments capable of creating great emotional impact. The civic leadership modified the places of sanctity and the very symbols of urban memory: the city's geography began to change its look, and all of the principle places were reconsidered. The interest in urban spaces increased and became more precise, more ambitious, and undisputed.⁵

Beginning with the premise that every social group is structured on the basis of a model that includes the rules of relationship, the goal of which is to render coexistence possible, and with the predictability of the behaviour of individual members, the public demonstrations that occurred in shared spaces become a form of epiphany of authority, an occasion in which political events are spectacularly managed in order to underline civic magnificence, an expedient through which the consensus of the citizenry is won. Public spaces become the theatre in which are staged all urban rituals that have a central role in defining and maintaining civil and social identity and that contribute to the coordination of the life of the members of the same community, both among themselves and with the outside world. Shared spaces began to be used in the cities as places appointed for public ceremonial representations, contributing to the strengthening of the collective identity as true political instruments. The rite helped control the acute internal social conflicts typical of the cities of central and northern Italy, conflicts that in most cases caused the twelfth-century com-

⁴ Walzer, 'On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought', p. 194.

⁵ Herlihy, 'Società e spazio nelle città italiana del Medioevo'; Le Goff, 'L'immaginario urbano nell'Italia medievale'; Crouzet-Pavan, *Pouvoir et élité*; Boucheron and Chiffolleau, *Les Palais dans la ville*; Mucciarelli, Piccini, and Pinto, *La costruzione della città comunale italiana*. In particular, see Moretti, 'I palazzi pubblici'; Crouzet-Pavan, 'La cité communale en quête d'elle-même'; and Hubert, 'Urbanizzazione, immigrazione e cittadinanza'.

munal institutions to yield to the strength of powerful families or to external dominant cities.⁶

The exceptional expansion of the communal cities happened between the *Duecento* and the *Trecento*. In this lapse of time, before the great pestilence of 1348, Florence passed from about 30,000 inhabitants to somewhere around 110,000; Pisa from 25,000 to more than 40,000; Padua from about 25,000 to approximately 40,000; and Venice from 80,000 to about 120,000.⁷ At the beginning of the fourteenth century, there were twelve cities with more than 40,000 inhabitants on the Italian peninsula and three that exceeded 100,000 inhabitants (Milan, Florence, and Venice). There are thirteen urban centres that oscillated between 20,000 and 40,000 inhabitants, forty-six that have between 10,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, and 117 that have between 5000 and 10,000 inhabitants.⁸ The last circle of walls began to be constructed in Florence in 1284 and were completed in 1333; they spanned a total of 8500 metres, enclosing an area of 447 hectares, with a thickness of two metres, a height of almost twelve metres to the top of the battlements, more than seventy defence towers and about fifteen gates.⁹ Florence was not an exception in this regard, as was clear from the developments in Siena during the seventy-year period in which the Government of the Nine was in power. The city walls are the result of continuous adjustments, and they symbolically protected the Sienese by enclosing the construction site of the Cathedral, the renovations of the mendicant churches, the *Palazzo Pubblico*, and private buildings, all built according to a homogenous style, which gave the impression of a city produced by a single

⁶ Tabacco, 'Nobiltà e potere ad Arezzo in età comunale'; Delumeau, 'Arezzo dal IX ai primi secoli del XII secolo'; Delumeau, 'Sur les origines de la commune d'Arezzo'; Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 251–95; Franceschi, 'Arezzo, il destino di una città'.

⁷ Hubert, 'Urbanizzazione, immigrazione e cittadinanza', pp. 132–33.

⁸ Ginatempo and Sandri, *L'Italia delle città*, p. 224.

⁹ Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, VII, 479. Cf. also Cherubini, 'Le città della Toscana', p. 327. Besides their defensive function, the urban gates were a sign to foreigners of the power and wealth of the city, which was more evident when adorned by statues and frescoes; Manetti and Pozzana, *Firenze: le porte dell'ultima cerchia di mura*, pp. 159–74. The last circle of walls of Florence begun in 1284 and completed in 1333 — were largely destroyed in 1865 with the carrying out of the Poggi Plan and represented one of the great achievements of its kind in the Western world. This was demonstrated by the *Veduta della Catena* — the name derives from a locked chain surrounding them — that Francesco di Lorenzo Rosselli executed between 1471 and 1482: on the *Carta della Catena*, conserved in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, see Chiarini and Marabottini, *Firenze e la sua immagine*, pp. 68–69.

phase of construction.¹⁰ In 1319, the Ghibelline bishop Guido Tarlati began the construction of a new circle of walls in Arezzo with the apparent intention of improving the exterior appearance of the city. In reality, there was the will to glorify the political direction that he himself imposed on the city, as the anonymous chronicler underlines in his *Annales Arretinorum Minores*: 'Menia civitatis Aretij constructa vi et ordine domini Guidonis de Petramala Episcopi et generalis domini Arretinorum, tempore Boccaccij comitis de Petroio potestatis Arretij.'¹¹ The statute of Arezzo of 1327, coeval with the construction of the last set of city walls, highlighted that 'Civitas vero intelligatur et sit a dictis cerchiis intra, ita quod singule domus et burgi, qui sunt inter cerchiis, esse de ipsa civitate ab omnibus habeantur'.¹² The circle of walls circumscribed the space of the *civitas* and became an instrument of political propaganda. Thus, if at their demographic peak many central and northern Italian cities reconsidered their own space from an architectonic point of view, Venice, with its singular position in the lagoon, saved its citizens the trouble of building defensive walls. It instead concentrated its resources on the construction of public, civic, and religious structures of an unmistakable style. Here, as well, the political and cultural developments and the consequent increase of wealth in turn had an effect on the circulation of artistic innovations and thus on the desire to materially embellish their urban space.¹³

In correspondence with the population growth, there arose most everywhere the necessity of placing attention on city planning and on public construction as shared elements through which the entire community was recognized. The production of the great public works occurred in a period of a few years and was accelerated in the period of the institutional consolidation of

¹⁰ On the construction of the city in the period of the Nine, see Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City*, pp. 5–27. The city walls were 'an essential characteristic of the city, a means of defence, and a sign of distinction between the urban and the extra-urban territory, whose residents enjoy a different form of juridical protection, of political participation, and of fiscal regulation' (connotato essenziale della città, mezzo di difesa e segno di distinzione fra il territorio urbano e il territorio extraurbano, i cui residenti godono di una diversa protezione giuridica, di una diversa partecipazione politica, di un diverso regime fiscale); Fasoli, 'Storia urbanistica e discipline medievistiche', p. 162, English translation is mine. On the structures of public use carried out in Tuscany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Balestracci, 'Gli edifici di pubblica utilità nella Toscana medievale', and Cherubini, *Le città italiane dell'età di Dante*.

¹¹ *Annales Arretinorum*, ed. by Bini and Grazzini, p. 43; Andanti, 'Approfondimenti sulle mura e sulla fortezza di Arezzo'.

¹² *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk 1, chap. 36, p. 29.

¹³ Crouzet-Pavan, *Venezia trionfante*, pp. 3–54.

mercantile supremacy and its respective regimes of the *popolo*. These were awe-inspiring works, produced by a plurality of intentions on the part of citizens, of which the project and its realization remained in the background given that their primary objective was the creation of a common identity through shared emotions. Thus, even when in the first decades of the fifteenth century the urban development that had characterized Italian cities was interrupted, rigorous programs were fine tuned for the manufacturing of consensus constructed around magnificence, an instrument through which the political capabilities of the ruling class could be communicated to the citizenry. The example of Rome, devastated by a series of invasions, sacked and neglected, was perfectly apt in this sense, given the maximum degradation and squalor in which the sacred city found itself in the moment in which the commune — among barons and agitators, great landowners and simple farmhands, rich merchants, cardinals and artists — attempted to rewrite its own architecture.¹⁴ Where great wealth is accumulated, self-celebration is easier to identify, as witnessed in the Florence of the Rucellai, Strozzi, Antinori, Pitti, and Medici families, whose patronage of the arts, in the same way as the patronage of the Piccolomini family in Siena, would contribute to the modernization of the social life of the city. The urban soil was no longer a neutral and inert pavement, and its inhabitants were no longer passive consumers of messages: it acquired a progressive political significance through the shared utilization of the space on the part of the consumers of the city, who choose to live in one place instead of in another, who stroll down one street rather than down a different one, who prefer one place over another.¹⁵ As a whole, the *Quattrocento* was the century in which the redevelopment of the cities was theorized by a chorus of many voices, prosperity and peace was sought out, and political strategies to contain poverty and depression were promoted. The city renewed its architectonic lexicon and, as Roland Barthes (1915–80) underlines, it became ‘a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak to our city, the city where we find ourselves, simply inhabiting it, walking through it, examining it.’¹⁶

¹⁴ Maire Vigueur, *L'altra Roma*, pp. 3–43.

¹⁵ Boucheron, ‘A qui appartient la cathédrale?’, and Boucheron, ‘L’architettura come linguaggio politico’, pp. 7–9.

¹⁶ Barthes, *Sémilogie et urbanisme*, II, 1280. Cf. also Eco, *Una struttura assente*.

The Places of Public Life

In the cities of central and northern Italy, civic pride developed a conception of public culture centred on merit and decorum. Public buildings were the instruments through which the communities were represented and the symbols that permitted the communication of the idea of the indissoluble nature of power. The construction of new edifices became essential, and the renewal of the urban map of the cities responded to the political program aimed at the consolidation of the form of government that promoted it. The town square became the place in which public life took place, where in the course of time the limits were designated within which economic structures were strengthened and the political order was established. It became the place of commercial negotiations, the space in which the community met, and where power was rendered sacred. The square represented for every urban centre the place in which economic transactions took place, in which social interaction aimed at the construction of civic spirit was promoted, and in which the symbols of power began to visually define themselves in the minds of the citizenry. The squares and the streets became the stages on which processions, feast days, and public demonstrations were continuously staged throughout the year. These spaces enhanced the civic architectonic structures and were in contention as the primary places for the recognition of a common civic identity.¹⁷

Within every culture, rituals have always represented a paradigmatic element with respect to which the social and cultural models of the community are defined. In this sense, those models connected to the world of politics had the capacity to impress onto the collective memory entire segments of history, or, on the contrary, that of erasing other segments, just as the rituals connected to the world of religion permitted the recognition of an entire community from within the same mystic body; and how, in the end, the rituals connected to the world of justice contributed to the maintenance of the social order with their exemplary nature. The narrative plot of these stories, if they can be defined as such, permits the historian to recover the most hidden meanings of the world in which men lived, to analyze reality in-depth, and to understand the sense of human actions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Fantoni, *La corte del Granduca*, pp. 51–76 (p. 51); Fantoni, *Il potere dello spazio*, pp. 77–152. On the city in the communal age, see Ricciardelli, 'La città comunale italiana', pp. 327–33; while on the construction of the image of the piazza during the Renaissance and its effects on modernity, see Zorzi, 'Figurazione pittorica e figurazione teatrale', pp. 449–53.

¹⁸ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 131–65; Trexler, 'Ritual Behaviour in Renaissance Florence'; Bertelli, *Il corpo del re*, pp. 19–35; Trexler, *Public Life*.

The urban structure, with its town squares, its views from inside the city, and its streets, becomes the scenic place in which such rituals are staged and in which the governing authority, celebrating itself, tends to legitimize itself by imposing itself upon the citizen spectators. The political authorities use common spaces in order to strengthen civic identity, for which the ritual acts that take place in such places are nothing but demonstrations of the ways in which the authority organizes itself, represents itself, and relates with the community. The main religious recurrences, papal visits, and the entrance of illustrious figures enrich the cities with tapestries and expensive fabrics, transforming them architecturally with temporary decorations executed by great artists and architects. The layout of the city characterizes its image through a series of progressively evolving and increasingly coherent adaptations so as to produce, Lewis Mumford (1895–1990) writes, ‘in the end a complex and slightly less than uniform city plan based on a prearranged geometric model’.¹⁹

The town square is the backdrop for many ceremonial functions as a space in which the monumental signs of the city are concentrated. The symbols that are found there confirm the signs of the public domination of the space. One of these is certainly the supply of water, necessary for life and related to aesthetic beauty. Water begins to flow in the canal system and to gush forth from fountains, and the monumental water source acquires a precise function representing the municipal identity. There are numerous examples of this. The public fountain built in the 1260s in Massa Marittima, next to the food storage warehouse of the commune, underlined an evident recall to abundance, to fertility, and to good government.²⁰ In 1276, still in the name of good government, water reached Piazza Maggiore of Orvieto, where a fountain of red marble with a bronze basin was erected ‘in order to have good water to drink’ (*per havere dell’acqua buona per bere*).²¹ In Perugia between 1275 and 1278, the commune of the *popolo* promoted municipal glorification by constructing the *Fontana Maggiore*, whose value as a monumental symbol was clearly visible in the complex iconographic program realized by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano under the direction of Brother Bevinante.²² The construction of the *Fontana Maggiore* as a place to meet and to exchange opinions, a symbol of the communion of faith, and a space in which civic life was shared, was directed towards cel-

¹⁹ Mumford, *La città nella storia*, II, 383.

²⁰ Ferzoco, *Il murale di Massa Marittima*.

²¹ Riccetti, ‘Per havere dell’acqua buona per bere’.

²² Benvenuti, ‘Sotto la volta del cielo’.

celebrating the political loyalty of the civic middle class, underlining the wisdom of the government that promoted it, and affirming the values of concord and civic peace that were obtained with the establishment of the new ruling class.²³ The *Fontana Maggiore* of Perugia, which guaranteed the gratuitous primary need of water to all its citizens, required an encyclopaedic decorative program. The signs of the zodiac and the allegories of the months must appear, the liberal arts and the stories from the book of Genesis must be portrayed, and the history of the world, including local legends, must be illustrated. In the fifty tiles that encircle the fountain are depicted the calendar of agricultural labours; biblical, historical and mythological episodes; two scenes from the fables of Aesop; and symbols of the city: the griffin, which is the animal having the body of a lion and the head of an eagle which symbolizes Perugia, and the lion, which recalls the city's adhesion to the Guelph party. In the sculptural design, Rome is represented on a throne in testimony to the concrete image of the two powers of the Church, with Perugia next to it holding a cornucopia. The depictions of Chiusi and Trasimeno were a clear statement of the desire to communicate the close political and economic ties of those years between Perugia and Umbrian centres, a preview of what would become the propagandistic politics of many city-states that in those years would begin to widen their own borders in constructing their own territorial state. The fountain has a polygonal basin of twelve sides, decorated with real and imaginary figures which made Perugia great, from the mythical Trojan founder of the city Euliste (vernacular translation of Ulysses) to Saint Herculanus, the bishop-defender of the city against the Goths. Recognized in the small statues are more figures from the Old and the New Testament together with portraits of Matteo da Correggio and Ermanno da Sassoferrato, *podestà* and captain of the *popolo* whose portrayals as *nobiles viri* for having commissioned the work invited the spectator to associate the contemporary and lay image of the city with evocative sacred images.²⁴

The books that record the income and expenditures of the commune of Siena reveal the necessity of the communal administration to finance celebrative and exhortative demonstrations aimed at self-legitimizing through the directed use of symbols. In this sense, Siena promoted the subterranean system of canals in order to make the water flow into the fountains, since the abundance of water was always a measure of the urban wealth and of the quality of

²³ Ricciardelli, 'Lupi e agnelli nel discorso politico dell'Italia comunale', pp. 278–79.

²⁴ Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 180–84.

good government.²⁵ From 1081 public water was accessed in the city thanks to the construction of the *Fontebranda*, the brick and travertine well placed inside the Camollia third of the city. This well, that took on its present form in 1246 and was mentioned even by Dante in his *Commedia*,²⁶ gratuitously supplied water to the quarter inhabited by artisans of the wool trade (*Arte della Lana*), whose production process necessitated a copious supply of water.²⁷ The subterranean canal system was the origin in Siena of the construction of another important public fountain for the city. In 1343, in fact, the commune commissioned the construction of the *Fonte Gaia*, the well placed at the centre of the *Piazza del Campo* that ensured free access to water for the entire population. Placed at the centre of the semi-circle, the masterpiece that between 1409 and 1419 was decorated by Jacopo della Quercia with beautiful panels represented the desire of the Government of the Nine to guarantee to the population the free supply of water, a clearly spelled-out message that insisted on the good government by the Siennese middle-class merchants and that only with great difficulty could be misunderstood.²⁸

Naturally, in Siena as elsewhere, the program *de magnificentia* went well beyond the provision of free water for the population. In the *Piazza del Campo*, Siena identified the civic focal point, and in the *Palazzo Pubblico* found control of the scenic space of the city. From here the Guelph and people's magistracy of the Nine talked to the city and at the same time carried out a rigorous program of organizing consensus aimed at passing on an idealized image of its own power to future generations.²⁹ In the *Piazza del Campo* the government of the

²⁵ Cardini, 'L'argento e i sogni', pp. 298–300. On these aspects, comparable to other urban areas of Tuscany in the age of Dante, see Gabbrielli, 'Stilemi senesi e linguaggi architettonici'. Such works were also projected externally as a function of the consolidation of territories, as demonstrated the promotion of projects like the utilization of the subterranean waters of the Diana River and of the Port of Talamone: on the Port of Talamone, acquired by the Republic of Siena in 1303, see Tangheroni, 'Siena e il commercio internazionale nel Duecento e nel Trecento', p. 103, and Sordini, *Il porto della 'gente vana'*, pp. 84–112.

²⁶ Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Inferno*, XIII. 76–78.

²⁷ In 1246 a lion was placed in *Fontebranda* with an epigraph stating: 'Item LV sol. Magistro Iohanni pro pretio leonis novi missi in Fontem Brandium et unius lapidis scripti positi ibidem': Cammarosano, 'Siena dalla solidarietà imperiale al gulfismo', p. 462.

²⁸ On water as a fundamental element of life and how it directly contributes to the elaboration of social systems, see Bachelard, *Psicanalisi delle acque*; while for a comparative analysis, see Glick, *Irrigation and Society in Medieval Valencia*.

²⁹ On the *Piazza del Campo*, see Guidoni, *Il Campo di Siena*, while on the use of the piazza I refer you to the example of all examples, the election of Pope Pius II, which took place in

Nine commissioned public works whose scope and majesty found space even among contemporaries: in his *Commedia*, Dante defines the Sieneese as a futile and inconsistent people because of their exaggerated program *de magnificencia*.³⁰ In 1325 the cornerstone of the 'Mangia' Tower (*Torre del Mangia*) was laid,³¹ and in 1344, the 'bell of the *popolo*' (*campana del popolo*), with the goal of measuring out what was known as the 'merchant's time', was lifted into place in the great tower. In 1360 Master Perino according to some, Bartolomeo Guidi according to others, put into place the first mechanical clock — to which, in 1400, Gaspare di Simone degli Ubaldini (the celebrated author of the clocks in Venice, Orvieto and Città di Castello) applied the wooden robot (redone in brass in 1425 by the Florentine Dello di Niccolò) which the Sieneese population would call Mangia from then on.³²

The old Roman forum of Lucca is the site of the *Piazza San Michele*, the place of meetings and commercial exchange, the zone in which the two principle Roman roads come together, the *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus maximus*, the place in which the representation of civic power was received and that in 1492 would become the site of the *Palazzo Pretorio*.³³ Even in Florence, for representing the good government and the perfection its political orchestration, the scenic space of the *Piazza dei Priori*, now *Piazza della Signoria*, was

Rome on September 3, 1458: that same day, in fact, the Sieneese had depicted on a small wooden board (*biccherna*) the image of what had taken place in Rome. In the portrayal, however, the coronation was not taking place in Rome, but in Siena, and more precisely in the *Piazza del Campo*, right in front of the *Palazzo Pubblico*; Nevola, 'Civic Identity and Private Patrons'.

³⁰ 'Non fu già mai gente sì vana come la senese': Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Inferno*, xxix. 121–22. Another foreign contemporary, Giovanni Sercambi of Lucca, remembers Siena in his collection of short stories as a place of market and of merchants: on the references to the short stories of Sercambi, see Cherubini, *Signori, contadini, borghesi*, p. 14, and Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 301–02.

³¹ 'E l'operaio del duomo', as Agnolo di Tura writes, 'misse in fondo di detta tore alquante monete per memoria di detta tore, e fuvvi messo in ogni canto di detta tore nel fondo una pietra con lettere greche, ebraiche e latine, perché non fusse percossa da tuono né da tempesta': Agnolo di Tura del Grasso, 'Cronica senese', ed. by Lisini and Iacometti, p. 428.

³² It is not certain if the name derives from the abbreviation of the nickname Mangiaguadagni (earnings eater), attributed to a young nobleman of the commune, a certain Giovanni di Balduccio, known among the Sieneese as a spendthrift. It is certain that Mangia and Mangiaguadagni recall, for the obvious and overly simple association of ideas, the palace of Consumption (*palazzo della Consuma*), the well-known headquarters of the Spendthrift Club (*brigata spendereccia*), and thus the proverbial prodigality of the 'vain people' (*gente vana*) of Siena as remembered in Dante: Cairola, 'La Torre del Mangia'.

³³ Bertelli, *Trittico: Lucca, Ragusa, Boston*, pp. 19–48.

utilized, a place chosen for communicating messages to the city and to the territory. Here the civic identity was displayed and control of power was legitimized in front of the *Palazzo della Signoria*, next to which was constructed a public colonnade in 1356 in order to allow a better form of political communication for the civic government. With the construction of the *Loggia della Signoria*, the place was created in which the government of the city was nominated every two months, chivalric titles were confirmed, and the scepter of command was conferred to the captains of the militia. The square had its stage, an architecture that was open, protected, spectacular, and of notable size, in which civil ceremonies that cannot have had the same visibility in the darkness of the *Palazzo della Signoria* or in the *Arengario* can solemnly took place.³⁴

In Venice *Piazza San Marco* was the metaphorical place in which civic power was affirmed. Here, thanks to an entire series of rituals, the figures, symbols, and virtues of the republic were displayed and animated in a spectacle that was repeated in brief intervals and whose repetition was a sign of the serene immutability of the institutions and of the political system. In St Mark's square, the united body composed of the Venetian political authorities ritually staged and re-staged spectacles. The glory of the state fell on each of its members, for which there was the obligation of the high-ranking administrators (*procuratori*) to join in the procession of the *doge* and of the *Signoria* that formed in the square on the feast day of the patron saint and on each of the solemn feast days. St Mark's square soon became the place of a large part of the ceremonial occasions, thereby resuming the alliance of politics and religion in a single venue. The association between the palace and the basilica rendered this space anthropologically central: a testimony to this were the late thirteenth century chronicles of Martino da Canal, who described the twelve principal ceremonies of the year and illustrates the concentration of the feast days in this perimeter.³⁵

Since the time of antiquity, the Campidoglio in Rome was the principal theatre of politics and the place in which the symbolic civic values were established. It is here that Petrarch, on 8 April 1341, received the poetic corona-

³⁴ On the theme of urban scenic design in fourteenth-century Florence, see Trachtenberg, 'Scénographie urbaine et identité civique', and Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye*. On the Loggia della Signoria and its symbols, see Vossilla, *La Loggia della Signoria*. The *Loggia della Signoria*, which came to be known in the *Cinquecento* as the *Loggia dei Lanzi* — because it is there that the Lanzi were stationed, the German mercenary soldiers who guarded the Duke — was realized by Lorenzo di Filippo, by Simone di Francesco Talenti, and finally by Benci di Cione, who worked on it from 1376 until 1382 (Vossilla, 'La piazza, l'Arengario, la Loggia della Signoria').

³⁵ Muir, 'Representations of Power', pp. 227–31.

tion, and that Cola di Rienzo (1313–54) on 20 May 1347, in inaugurating a regime seeking to overturn the power of the great Roman barons in the name of the ‘rules of the good state’ (*ordinamenti del buono stato*),³⁶ had the private *loggias* of Roman families torn down in favour of glorifying instead those of the Capitoline Hill as a privileged meeting place of the new, republican Rome, thereby restoring to the Campidoglio the role it had in ancient times. In the late Middle Ages, then, the space that since classical antiquity was considered the political heart of the city was restored. The meeting place of the Senate, the place of public executions and of the defence of the city, was where the Romans celebrated the procession to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and it was from here that the procession departed with the statues of the gods on the day of the Roman games (*ludi*). Since antiquity, in this place were held propitiatory rites which involved the sphere of the lay and of the religious, as demonstrated by the conclusive phases of the triumphs, where with solemn ceremonies the victorious *duces* (military commanders) were conducted in front of the entire population.³⁷ But Roman ceremonies had two natures, and the religious one, beyond the lay one, was concentrated in St Peter’s Square in the duplicity of papal power, which was both spiritual and temporal at the same time. The rituals that were propagated from this place over all of Christianity regulated the strictly religious celebrations marked by the yearly liturgical calendar as well as the recurring events, such as the opening of the Holy Door for the Jubilee or the interregnum rites. The great ritual occasions related to the person of the pontiff, like his election, his coronation, and his funeral rites, acquired their own marked specificity and were codified in coordination with the rites of sovereignty of monarchs and European princes. The pope became, then, sovereign of his city, and his figure assumed growing importance in implementing the events of particular political importance, like, for example, the reception of ambassadors or the conferral of status to Catholic princes.³⁸

³⁶ On the following day, in fact, the tribune sent the written order to leave the city to the most powerful baron of the time, Stefano Colonna. Well-protected inside his own fortified home in S. Marcello, the elderly Colonna reacted theatrically in front of his family: ‘Missore Stefano la cetola presa sì-lla sciliaio e fecene milli piezzi e disse: se questo pascio me fao poca de ira, io lo farraio iettare dalle finestre de Campituoglio’: Anonimo Romano, *Cronica*, ed. by Porta, p. 114.

³⁷ Akerman, *Punti di distanza*, pp. 258–79.

³⁸ Visceglia, ‘Papal Sovereignty and Civic Rituals in the Early Modern Age’.

The Fear of Damnation

In the late Middle Ages, civic conscience was never formed, at least in the Western world, without the spiritual component, whose methods of communication were always indissolubly linked to the symbolism of the patron saint's relics. For this reason religious architecture was among the instruments that more than others contributed to the manufacture of political and social consensus. The greatness of cities was measured by the construction or the enlarging of the cathedral, which often had the expectation to be the largest in all of Christendom, a sacred construction that had the obligation to synthesize the political ideals of the government that sponsored it in the name of the good and peaceful state of the city and its territory. The construction or the expansion of the cathedral was among the principal political acts of every civic community, with the goal of making permanent in the mind of population the idea that the state, a patron of architectonic magnificence, was the only true guarantor of political stability. Connected to the construction of the cathedral was the veneration of the patron saint, who in the largest urban communities of central and northern Italy was placed at the centre of the collective identity of the city. The lavish processions were tied to this identity as occasions in which a specific civic ritual took place, at times characterized by emphasizing symbolic moments in the course of which emblematic gestures are made, such as the offering of candles and banners or the freeing of prisoners.³⁹

The most sacred building of the city, the cathedral, was constructed to house the relics of the saint. The construction of the pre-eminent sacred space provided a source of civic pride, as Giovanni Villani reveals when he speaks of Santa Maria del Fiore, begun by mandate of the *Signoria* in 1296 by the architect Arnolfo di Cambio and associated by the chronicler with the period of greatest political stability reached by the commune of the *popolo* following the drafting of the Ordinances of Justice (*Ordinamenti di giustizia*) against the magnates. And in the same year, the chronicler reports that the Florentines added the building of a bell tower to the project.⁴⁰

³⁹ Orselli, *La città altomedioevale e il suo santo patron*, pp. 5–31; Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 92–93 and 97–105; Orselli, *Tempo, città e simbolo fra tardoantico e Alto Medioevo*, pp. 81–110; Golinelli, 'L'agiografia cittadina'; Peyer, *Città e santi patroni nell'Italia medievale*; Benvenuti, 'Culti civici: un confronto europeo'.

⁴⁰ 'I cittadini s'accordarono di rinnovare la chiesa maggiore di Firenze, la quale era molto di grossa forma e piccola a comparazione di sì fatta cittade, e ordinano di crescerla, e di trarla addietro, e di farla tutta di marmi e con figure intagliate': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk IX, chap. 9. Cf. Najemy, 'The Beginnings of Florence Cathedral'.

The encyclopaedic program realized by Giotto for the bell tower of Santa Maria del Fiore, depicted on panels, had the goal of describing an authentically human conception of the work supported by the Florentine government of the *popolo* in power in the city. With the help of his workshop (that is, with his collaborators, among whom Nino Pisano, Gino Micheli da Castello, and probably Maso di Banco), Giotto concluded with the representations of the planets, the liberal, mechanical and figurative arts, the virtues, and the sacraments, as well as the decoration of the prophets and the sibyls. In the second quarter of the *Trecento*, Andrea Pisano worked on those panels placed in the centre of the civic sacred space that must have depicted the abilities of the masters of the Florentine arts in order to portray the tranquillity and the productivity of the entire community. The project must have described the human activities identified by Scholastic philosophy in the three categories of *Necessitas*, of *Virtus*, and of *Sapientia*. This simple lexicon could guarantee complete legibility by the citizenry, and through an elementary network of quotations could be varied, adapted, and, above all, understood by everyone. Luca della Robbia brought to conclusion the iconographic program of the bell tower between 1437 and 1439, sculpting some of the tiles of the lower base on the northern side.⁴¹

The beginning of the works for the expansion of the cathedral of Saint Martin in Lucca dates from 1308,⁴² when there was in power a political class of Black Guelph orientation with a decidedly popular identity that Dante saw as a hodgepodge of corrupt men, where 'every man there is a barrator'.⁴³ In Siena

⁴¹ The construction of the bell tower of *Santa Maria del Fiore* in Florence began in 1334 under the direction of Giotto, who continued working on the project until his death in 1337. At that point, Andrea Pisano took over as director, and after his death in 1348 the work was entrusted to the direction of Francesco Talenti, who brought it to conclusion between 1350 and 1359. The different professions as represented by Giotto in the panels were an expression of a new, anthropological conception of work: Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 184–85; Carlotti, *Il lavoro e l'ideale*.

⁴² Concioni, *San Martino di Lucca*.

⁴³ 'Ogn'uom v'è barattier': Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Inferno*, xxi. 41. Dante defined the ruling class of these years as corrupt, ironically utilizing the reference in the next part of the verse to Bonturo Dati, whose fame as a dishonest banker evidently crossed the confines of the city of the Serchio River; Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 71–72. Beyond Dante, the Lucchese poet Pietro dei Faininelli, also a White Guelph who was excluded politically by them, as he belonged to a noble family, writes about the terrible quality of this ruling class; Zilli, 'Le rime di Pietro de' Faininelli'. After the deliberation of August 1339, which called for the construction of the central nave, the work on the construction of

the enlarging of Saint Mary of the Assumption was carried out following the financing that the General Council of the Bell allocated in 1339 as a consequence of the city reaching its demographic at the height of the government of the Nine's popularity in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁴ In Orvieto, under the impulse of the bishop and thanks to the financial contribution of the commune of the *popolo*, between 1285 and 1290 the new *duomo* was completed, while the old one was demolished in 1297.⁴⁵ In Florence, as a consequence of the inauguration of the Ordinances of Justice in 1293 against the magnates and of the resulting diminished political role of the civic nobility, the mercantile government sponsored the realization of new public spaces in *Piazza della Signoria* and in *Piazza San Giovanni*.⁴⁶ In Pisa the reconsideration of all the space of the sacred area acquired a founding value in the second half of the thirteenth century when, at the desire of the mercantile government, the *Piazza del Duomo* was completed, constructed in order to identify the city with Jerusalem, the sacred city *par excellence* as the city of God.⁴⁷

Inside churches, as well as outside of them, the divine word became the paradigm for all words. New forms of culture and spirituality that found a peculiar expression in the activity of preachers were developed around sacred places and, therefore, in the town squares. As skilful as merchants and as well received as jesters, preachers attracted the attention of the public with their sermons, forms of communication in which the clerical culture of the Latin language was proposed in the vernacular to the large public of the city: the intent of the preaching was not to entertain the clergy and the most educated laymen, but to reach those who, for different reasons, were the furthest away from the possibility of contact with the evangelic message. Related in two ways to the birth of the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century, preaching adapted its objectives and its strategies to the changes that marked the history of the Church and

the cathedral of Siena was interrupted by the plague of 1348 to be later taken up and once again abandoned in 1355, the year of the downfall of the government of the Nine; Gillerman, 'Cosmopolitanism and Campanilismo'.

⁴⁴ Moretti, 'Aspetti dell'architettura e dell'urbanistica in Toscana', pp. 156–57; Cherubini, 'Le città della Toscana', p. 327.

⁴⁵ Rossi Caponeri, 'Il Duomo di Orvieto e l'attività edilizia'.

⁴⁶ Rubinstein, 'The Piazza Signoria in Florence'; Haines, 'La Piazza del Duomo di Firenze'; and Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye*. On the Palazzo della Signoria, see Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio*.

⁴⁷ Ahl, 'Camposanto, Terra santa'; Baracchini and Castelnuovo, *Il Camposanto di Pisa*, while on the myth of Jerusalem and its impact on the medieval mentality, I refer you to Cardini, *Gerusalemme: una storia*, pp. 67–83.

of the Christian practices in the following age. The pulpit, inside or outside the church, became the political instrument for governing the cities which relied on these professionals of the word in order to overcome internal divisions, to support civic politics, and to guarantee peaceful co-existence. Both the governments of the *popolo* and those based on a *signore* feared preachers who intervened in favour of political programs that entered into conflict with their own. They counted on their oratorical ability, which rendered them political subjects in every sense, capable of becoming involved in civic life with the force of their words and gestures. They could instruct, warn, stimulate, and intercede in society, convincing families and adversaries, favouring truces between factions and peace between families.⁴⁸

In the course of the fifteenth century, preaching received new impetus above all from the vast reform movement known as the Observance, to which adhered figures such as the Franciscans Bernardino da Siena (1380–1444), Giovanni da Capestrano (1386–56), and Giacomo della Marca (c. 1391–1476), and also the Dominican Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98): churches and confraternities competed for the services of these itinerant friars, whose sermons were faithfully transcribed. The civic political authorities continued to turn to the work of the preachers in order to obtain support and to assure consensus in the widespread awareness of the capacity of many of them to obtain results that no edict could achieve. The case of the campaigns in support of the policy of containment of luxuries is an example of the power of preachers, who, in Ferrara, as the preaching of Giovanni da Capestrano demonstrated, even helped the civic authorities in the fight against feminine vanities and in particular against the ‘women’s tow’ (*traini delle donne*), that is, against the extremely long trains that they loved to drag behind themselves.⁴⁹ The spoken word continued to be the perfect form of communication for generating consensus; and thus the town square, with its architectonic symbols, became the functional locale in which the population gathered to listen to the words of the preachers. In front of the facade of Prato’s cathedral, which between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries was reno-

⁴⁸ Delcorno, *Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione volgare*; Artifoni, ‘Gli uomini dell’assemblea’; Delcorno, ‘Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200–1500)’; Muzzarelli, *Pescatori di uomini*; and Debby, *The Renaissance Pulpit*. On this theme, see also Magli, ‘Un linguaggio di massa nel Medioevo’; Magli, *Gli uomini della penitenza*; Rusconi, *Predicazione e vita religiosa nella società italiana*; Martin, *Le Métier de prédicateur à la fin du Moyen Age*; Berlioz, ‘L’Auditoire des prédicateurs dans la littérature des “exempla”’; Dessì, ‘La prophétie, l’évangile et l’état’; Bolzoni, *La rete delle immagini*; Muessig, *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, pp. 3–9; and Bruni, *La città divisa*.

⁴⁹ Muzzarelli, *Gli inganni delle apparenze*, p. 175.

vated, was placed the Pulpit of the Holy Belt, or of Thomas' Girdle (*Pergamo del Sacro Cingolo*), a work by Donatello and Michelozzo which substituted a preceding gothic pulpit between 1428 and 1438.⁵⁰ The civilian regulations required a work of awareness and persuasio, beyond that of amplification that only the preachers at that point were capable of offering, thanks to their ability in what Bernardino da Siena himself defines as 'hook fishing' (*pesca all'amo*):

Hey, have you ever seen line fishing? — Yes — You find an earthworm, and you put it on the hook, and the fish goes for the worm, and he's caught. You see that to have the food the fish is caught. What does the food mean? It means the word; to go get the word, the soul gets caught, thus it commands the body to have the pleasure of that food of the word. And if you have the pleasure, you will immediately be caught⁵¹

The Image of Power

A prevailing cultural feature of the first communal movement is the recovery of the forms of republican Rome, understood as models of organization of the civic and political life of the *civitas*, a reference less influenced than others by the ecclesiastical institutions and by imperial authority. The commercial and institutional centre of the cities founded by Rome was the forum, the large, rectangular space that usually accommodated on the shorter sides the edifices of civil and religious power (the basilica and the temple) and, on the longer sides, shops and taverns. The forum was surrounded by a colonnade, a portico supported by marble columns surrounding the area. The centre of urban life, the forum opened onto large roads of communication, normally situated at the intersection of the *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus maximus*, the two principal axes which formed the structural basis of the orthogonal system of Roman settlements. Between the third and the fourth centuries, with the decline of the imperial institutions and the progressive diminishing of public authority, the institutional and commercial function of the forum was lost in favour of the

⁵⁰ Marchini, *La Cappella del Sacro Cingolo nel Duomo di Prato*; Bonsanti, 'Il Pulpito di Donatello'; Giusti, *Donatello restaurato*.

⁵¹ 'Doh, avete voi mai veduto pescare a lenza? — Sì — Elli si piglia uno lombrico, e mettesi nell'amo, e 'l pesce va per pigliare el lombrico, e rimane preso lui. Vedi che per avere il cibo rimane preso il pesce. Che significa il cibo? Significa la parola; che per andare a pigliare la parola, rimane presa l'anima, imperò che il corpo ha il diletto di pigliare quel cibo dalla parola. E se tu arai il diletto, subito rimarrai preso': Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, ed. by Delcorno, predica III, 141–73, p. 164. English translation is mine.

space in front of the main church of the city that progressively assumed for the citizenry the role that, until then, was performed by the public square.⁵²

The area of the forum thus began to be occupied and developed by private owners, both lay and ecclesiastic, leaving the memory and the symbolic awareness of the ancient forum in the intersection of the *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus maximus*. Between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the communal authorities were aware that the control of the architectural structures built in the classical age could offer authority to the autonomous institutions of self-government: the headquarters of civic government were constructed in close proximity to the ancient forum, and therefore near the hub of the principal intersection. It was, in fact, around the civic meeting places that the sense of social and civil continuity began to be reinforced. During the height of the communal city, as seen above, the great urban defensive walls were built, and grandiose works that aimed to put the seal on the image of the city were constructed. The architectural fervour that pervaded the majority of Italian cities was comparable to the New York of the 1920s and 1930s, when grandiose skyscrapers were built on the entire peninsula. In this new dimension, the most relevant symbol was the town hall.

From the Latin *Palatium* (Palatine) — a toponym indicating the Palatine Hill in Rome on which rose the residence of emperors, beginning with Augustus himself — the term *palazzo* acquired by the evolution of the toponym the meaning of ‘imperial palace’. In the Carolingian empire, the *palazzo* was the centre of regal power and indicated the representatives of the king with the *comites palatini*, the counts of the palace who became then the heroic and valorous warriors of the emperor, protagonists of the *chanson de geste*.⁵³ Its origin as an emblematic edifice dates to between the late eleventh and the early twelfth centuries. In its construction — with the names *broletto*, *arengario*, *credenza* — the cities of northern Italy preceded those of central Italy. Continuously enlarged or renovated, the communal town halls, the most relevant symbols of communal society, were erected according to various architectonic typologies. In Tuscany, for example, the number of town halls exceeded one hundred.⁵⁴

⁵² Fasoli, ‘Città e storia delle città’, and Abrams, ‘Città e sviluppo economico’.

⁵³ Benvenuti, “Secondo che raccontano le storie”, and Racine, ‘Saint patron et religion civique en Italie’.

⁵⁴ Rodolico and Marchini, *I Palazzi del Popolo*; Cardini and Raveggi, *Palazzi Pubblici di Toscana*; Moretti, ‘Aspetti dell’architettura e dell’urbanistica in Toscana’, pp. 165–66. On the Palazzo of Massa Marittima, cf. Rodolico and Marchini, *I Palazzi del popolo*, pp. 160–61; on that of Volterra, see pp. 170–71; on that of Pienza, p. 163.

Thus, in 1284 Prato began the construction of its own town hall and, from the second half of the 1280s, Pisa found its operative centre of political life in the *Palazzo del Popolo e degli Anziani*, today known as *Palazzo della Carovana*.⁵⁵ Around the year 1288 San Gimignano began to build a town hall, while the *Palazzo dei Priori* in Florence was begun shortly thereafter in 1294.⁵⁶ In that same year the construction of the town hall of Pistoia was underway, and, towards the end of the century, San Miniato began the construction of a *palatium novum* in relation to the establishment of the government of the *popolo*,⁵⁷ while in Siena the work on the building of the *Palazzo Pubblico* began in 1297.⁵⁸ In Arezzo, the *Palazzo dei Priori* was constructed beginning in 1333 under the direction of Pier Saccone (1261–1356).⁵⁹ Contrary to what happened in the other Tuscan cities, and more generally in the rest of central and northern Italy, in Lucca no town hall was built until at least 1370: until this date, in fact, the *palatium civitatis* was located north of the church of San Michele and, documented for the first time in 1197, was approximately identified by the Lucchese as *Palatium Sancti Michaelis in Foro*.⁶⁰

Even outside of Tuscany the tendency remained the same. In Bergamo, the town hall was built in the years between 1182 and 1198, in Cremona around the year 1206, in Como around 1215, in Milan in 1233, in Brescia between 1223 and 1254, and in Monza at the end of the *Duecento*. The model for the town hall in Lombardy spread to other regions of northern Italy, as demonstrated by the case of Piacenza, where the town hall was begun in 1280; and

⁵⁵ Garzella, 'L'edilizia pubblica comunale in Toscana,' pp. 307–11.

⁵⁶ The deliberation for the construction of the building was presented in 1294 and confirmed in 1298, while its effective realization began in 1299; Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Maire Vigueur, 'L'Eessor urbain dans l'Italie communale.'

⁵⁸ In Siena, the first expressions of civil architecture began in 1281 with the construction of a public edifice that one year after the inauguration of the Government of the Nine, in 1288, the Council of the bell effectively began with construction: Rodolico and Marchini, *I Palazzi del popolo*, pp. 168–69. On the costly campaign for the acquisition of lands and buildings carried out by Sienese authorities between 1293 and 1297 in the area chosen for the new construction — that of the *Piazza del Campo* — and on the desire of the Sienese popular governors to equal and exceed any model of construction by noble families in the city or in the surrounding areas, I refer you to Cairoli and Carli, *The Palazzo Pubblico of Siena*.

⁵⁹ Franchetti-Pardo, *Arezzo*, pp. 62–65.

⁶⁰ Seidel and Romano, *Potere delle immagini*, pp. 215–25; on the central position of the chiesa, on the references to the Roman Forum, still alive in the toponym, and on how these elements conditioned the choice of place for those who propose to reconstruct in Lucca an autonomous municipal government, see Seidel and Romano, *Potere delle immagini*, pp. 215–16.

in several areas of central Italy, as demonstrated by the case of Orvieto, whose town hall was restored in 1255 by Alexander IV to serve first as residence of the *podestà*, then from 1281 as residence of the Captain of the *popolo* at the behest of the Seven Lords (*Signori Sette*).⁶¹ The same organization of space occurred within the city walls erected in the time of Barbarossa in Genoa: work began in 1260 on the construction of the *Palazzo del Mare*, the town hall, the original nucleus of what is today *Palazzo San Giorgio*, and of the palace of the captain of the *popolo*, the original nucleus of today's Ducal Palace. Enlarged at the end of the 1330s, it was renamed *Palazzo Ducale* following the election of the first *doge* Simon Boccanegra in 1339.⁶² In Venice the sacred space was the space of power. St Mark's Square was the place of political cohesion in which the propaganda of the *Serenissima* was legitimized and reinforced. The changes to the decor, the ceremonial practices, and the temporary furnishings positioned there beginning in the thirteenth century outlined this political process. The ceremonies and the religious rituals that were carried out in this space were always guided by and connected to the political sphere by which they were sponsored, for which it was exactly in this space that the architecture and the decor became an essential part of the spiritual experience. The fact that such emphasis was always patronized by the civic authorities and that the *doges* placed progressive attention on the ceremonies in St Mark's Square revealed the necessity for this fusion: it was there that the boundaries of the social history of the *Serenissima* were defined, and it was in this space that the political messages were merged with the religious ones.⁶³

In order to avoid ostentation on the part of private individuals in Florence and Siena, just as in many other urban centres of the period, the great architectonic initiatives were normally commissioned by the guilds and by the *signoria*. The construction of the town hall responded to the need to find a centre of power that supported a program *de magnificentia* of which it was the city as a whole that was the protagonist. The town hall and its symbols communicated to the population the moral virtues of the government in charge and the volition on the part of the ruling class to promote a centre of power that could manage and amplify the collective civic pride. The case of Florence helps to understand how this process materializes in the second half of the *Duecento*

⁶¹ Moretti, 'I palazzi pubblici'.

⁶² Petti Balbi, 'Genova', in *Le città del Mediterraneo*, pp. 372-73; Shaw, 'Genoa'. For the city planning aspect, see Grossi Bianchi and Poggi, *Una città portuale del Medioevo*.

⁶³ Hopkins, 'Strati di spazi sacri a San Marco, Venezia'. On the Ducal Palace of Venice, see the synthesis of Romanelli, *Il Palazzo ducale a Venezia*, pp. 9-17.

with the rise of the *popolo*, when the new emerging citizen classes created new spaces in the city through artists like Arnolfo di Cambio, Giotto, or Orcagna.⁶⁴ The image of civic power revolved around the town hall, a structure that was the specular image of a castle — a fortification symbol of aristocratic feudal power which had by then moved into the cities. A building of great dimensions, majestic, and of particular architectonic dignity, the town hall was destined to become the home of the representative government of the city. With the advent of regimes of the *popolo*, such places assumed a crucial role in the civic life of the city: the spaces in which the new government in power promoted itself through great construction works were often signed with commemorative stones and symbols, with the intent of communicating to contemporaries and to posterity the authorship of the initiative. The great construction projects of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represented the affirmation of a new lexicon aimed at guaranteeing full legibility by the citizenry. Through a continuous network of quotations, this vocabulary began to be varied, and therefore adapted, in order to be exported from the dominant city to the most important public edifices of the cities of its *territorium*. And of all the visible works, the town hall was the preeminent symbol, as demonstrated by the relaunching of communal iconography throughout the *Quattrocento*. The example *par excellence* is that adopted by Antonio Filarete (c. 1400–69), who planned an ideal city for Francesco Sforza by utilizing architecture from the palaces of the *podestà*, of the captain of the *popolo*, and of the town halls from Tuscan cities. The influence of the town hall as a symbol of the Italian communes is present not only in the iconography of the sculptor, architect, and theorist of Florentine architecture: it is curious to note how one of the most important creative minds of the fifteenth century theorized a universal style in which Tuscan architecture becomes the reference to which every building must aspire, even the public buildings of seignorial governments.⁶⁵

The town hall became, then, one of the most tangible symbols of the political symbology of the communal age. It was placed at the centre of the city, in the heart of the public space, and it best expressed the ideals of civic government. The ostentatious clarity written into the very stones manifested the will to show the magnificence of power to the citizenry, thereby reinforcing the conception of the structure itself as the seat of public administration during the communal age. It was the edifice that more than any other generated a true political language as a symbol of power, an architectonic structure that

⁶⁴ Polcri, 'L'etica del perfetto cittadino', p. 202; Polcri, 'Teoria e prassi'.

⁶⁵ Filarete, *Trattato di Architettura*, ed. by Finoli and Grassi, II, 283–86.

exemplified the political nature of the city that hosted it. The images of patron saints that safeguarded a small-scale model of their city in their hands multiplied in great numbers. During the course of the fifteenth century, this culture rapidly expanded and became an integral part of civic identity, as demonstrated by the painting by Sano di Pietro, who in 1446, when frescoing *San Pietro Alessandrino tra i beati Andrea Gallerani e Ambrogio Sansedoni* in the Hall of the She-Wolves (*Sala delle Lupe*) in *Palazzo Pubblico* in Siena: the work reproduces the walled communal city at the moment of its apogee, inside which the cathedral and the town hall emerge on the urban fabric, rich with palaces and religious buildings.⁶⁶

If in the dominant urban centres the town hall was the residence of the civic magistracies (consuls, captain of the *popolo*, *podestà*, priors, elders), in the subjected cities and in the newly formed urban centres it became the place designated to welcome the representative of the dominant city. The construction of the town hall had the great importance of underlining the power of the city over its territory because the architectonic features utilized in its construction were systematically reutilized for the construction of palaces in the subjected cities, a political act through which the dominant city expressed its control over the territory.⁶⁷ The exportation of a dominant model towards the periphery was evident in the features of the Sienese civic architecture and became the point of reference, from a symbolic standpoint, as well, for a large part of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century development of the city and of the surrounding areas under its control (*contado*). The reflection of the facade of the *Palazzo Pubblico* was evident in the *Palazzo dei Priori* in Magliano, in the *Palazzo Pretorio* and the *Porta Senese* in Buonconvento, in the fortress (*rocca*) and the city gate of Cassero in Montalcino, and in the bridge house (*cassero*) in Casole d'Elsa. In the Florentine territory, architectonic harmony can be found with the stylistic features of the *Bargello* and the *Palazzo dei Priori* (today's *Palazzo della Signoria*) in the construction of the *Palazzo dei Conti Guidi* in Poppi just as in the *Palazzo dei Priori* and in the *Palazzo degli Alberti* in Certaldo.⁶⁸ Florence populated its *contado* with New Lands (*Terre Nuove*), and with new civic devel-

⁶⁶ Fantoni, *Il potere dello spazio*, pp. 77–152; while on the sacralization of lay space between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, I refer you to Ricciardelli, 'Introduzione'.

⁶⁷ When the citizens of Prato in 1351 lost power over their city, to the advantage of the Florentines, they also lost the freedom of determining the planning of their own city, which now belonged to the Florentine magistratures: Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 187–250, especially p. 240.

⁶⁸ Franchetti-Pardo, 'Segnali architettonici e riconoscibilità politica di un territorio'.

opments which from 1299 to 1350 were founded, as David Friedman explains, 'to serve Florence [...]. They became administrative capitals of the extended Florentine state and the main resting places on the routes that brought people and merchandise from all over Europe'.⁶⁹ From the end of the thirteenth century, the city-states expanded the forms of their own political communication by projecting their urban power onto the satellite cities and assigning a proto-imperialistic political value to the monumentality of their own origins.⁷⁰

Between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the town hall became the palace of the *signore*. Interest in allegory was consolidated, and the virtues were associated with the vocabulary of power in terms of strength, temperance, generosity, magnificence, justice, and equality, utilized in order to visualize the Aristotelian guidelines of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, on the basis of which only the man who acts according to perfect virtue can claim to be as such, and only the politician who acts for the common good can define himself as such.⁷¹ The language of political communication was now concentrated on the figure of the *signore*, whose task was that of re-establishing the political memory of the commune or his predecessor to his own advantage. In Mantua, Ludovico Gonzaga, marquis of the city from 1444 to 1478, constructed his ducal palace in the area of the cathedral, thus uniting, in order to destroy the political memory of his predecessors, some houses belonging to the Bonacolsi family, which was expelled from the city in 1328. In the first few years of his rule, Ludovico strove to follow up with a series of iconographic programs, in particular the Arthurian cycle imagined by Pisanello in Corte Vecchia and taken up by his father Gian Francesco, the marquis of the community from 1407 to 1444. After his sojourn in Florence at the end of the 1450s, Ludovico radically changed his tastes, and he entrusted Andrea Mantegna with the task of frescoing the inside of the north-east great tower of the Castle of San Giorgio in Mantua, destined to be the residence of the *signore*. Between 1462 (according to some, 1465) and 1474, Mantegna worked on the Painted Chamber (*Camera Dipinta*), better known as the Wedding Chamber (*Camera degli Sposi*). Beyond the diverse and varied interpretations of the episodes, dates, and characters involved in this exceptional decorative cycle, it is a pictorial program of extraordinary intent. In the Wedding Chamber, in fact, the political and humanistic affirmation of the acquired status of the Mantuan dynasty stands out unequivocally and with an extremely expressive language. The family of the prince in its different forms,

⁶⁹ Friedman, *The Florentine New Towns*, p. 6.

⁷⁰ Ricciardelli, 'Il linguaggio della subordinazione politica'.

⁷¹ Aristotle, *Etica Nicomachea*, ed. by Natali, bk v, para. 3, pp. 173–77.

ecclesiastic and lay, the Mantuan court, and the political and geographical panorama in which the protagonists are portrayed, from Mantua to Milan all the way to Rome, unfold from within an articulated and complex pictorial composition. Forgotten is the pictorial cycle carried out by Pisanello in the 1440s on the walls of Corte Vecchia (which depicts a chivalric world by then outdated). The *elites* of the Gonzaga clan are recognized together with the prince in the great fresco that Mantegna painted with classical overtones: the military structure of the social and political heart of the Castle of San Giorgio became the residential edifice of the Gonzaga prince; within the castle the Gonzaga family members were celebrated with evident propagandistic intentions aimed at their legitimization as enlightened, and therefore undisputed, princes.⁷²

In the course of the *Trecento* the forms of political communication were tied more and more to the restricted circle of oligarchies, to which the communities indiscriminately entrusted the task of representing and guaranteeing public order. The same thing occurred even in those communal situations where the government of the *popolo* evolved into progressively oligarchic republican forms, because the forms of political communication always drew from the communal tradition in order to empty it of its political clout and to absorb it into the new system of power. If, therefore, in the communal age the primary objective of the politically motivated commissions aimed to celebrate the civic mercantile classes on the rise, with the establishment of the seignorial governments the political celebrations revolved around the new figure of the civic leader. The search for consensus and the reinforcement of community ties were now accentuated in order to concentrate on the *elites* in power. With the affirmation of seignorial regimes in Italy, the modalities of political communication change more in form than in substance. The communities began to increasingly identify themselves with their leaders, who listened to their needs, anxieties, and hopes. Under the government of Borso d'Este (1451–71) in Ferrara between 1469 and 1470, a cycle of frescoes that are pagan in nature is painted in order to decorate the walls of a room in Palazzo Schifanoia. What is known as the Hall of Months (*Salone dei Mesi*) is completed in the palace that Albert V d'Este built in 1385 and that later Borso, thanks to the work of the architect Pietro Benvenuto, expanded to double the size during his mandate. The intention was to equip the palace with an upper-floor ducal apartment, the epicentre of which became the representative hall that would house the frescoes. The propagandistic intentions that Borso placed in these frescoes were announced by the expanding of his ducal residence and by the impressive marble gate that

⁷² *Les palais dans la ville*, and Trevisani, 'La Camera Picta'.

Biagio Rossetti had embellished with the great coat-of-arms of the Este family, which depicts a unicorn in memory of the reclamations that the duke carried out. But it is first the preparatory drawings of Cosmé Tura (c. 1430–95) and the great fresco calendar by Francesco Del Cossa and by Ercole de' Roberti, born presumably from the inspiration of the astrologer and court librarian Pellegrino Prisciani, that gave life to one of the most successful programs of political propaganda of the Renaissance. The cycle of frescoes in the *Sala dei Mesi*, designed for the only still extant example of a residence destined for representation and for recreation, which at one time was called 'delight' (*delizia*) — the term *Schifanoia*, in fact, derives from 'avoid boredom' (*schifare la noia*), that is, removed the tedium of the urgent duties required by government —, had a precise propagandistic value, in that they were commissioned in preparation for the ordination of Borso d'Este as Duke of Ferrara by the pope. The glorification of the good government of the duke, guarantor of peace and stability in the dominions of the House of Este, is read, in fact, in the pictorial articulations. Seven of the Months (from March to September) are in a good state of preservation and almost completely legible, each of which is conceived on the basis of a partition in horizontal bands. The lower register contains episodes from the life of the court dominated by the presence of the duke, who wisely administers justice; in the middle section, the signs of the zodiac are flanked by *decani*, deities of ancient Egyptian origin who protect those born in each ten-day period of the month; the upper band is reserved for the triumphs of pagan divinities, who are marching as incarnations of different allegories.⁷³

In Urbino, Federico da Montefeltro, duke of the city by will of Pope Sixtus IV between 1474 and 1482, incentivized the arts by bringing to the city Francesco Laurana from Dalmazia, Francesco di Giorgio Martini from Siena, and Piero della Francesca from Borgo San Sepolcro. The latter was commissioned to produce the *Triumph of Federico da Montefeltro and of Battista Sforza*, a diptych that intended to celebrate the virtues of its client according to a precise and planned ethical, political, and cultural program, with the *signore* of Urbino at its centre.⁷⁴ As demonstrated by the conspicuous comments on

⁷³ Zorzi, *Ferrara: il sipario ducale*, pp. 3–59. See also Volpe, 'Palazzo Schifanoia, gli affreschi'; Varese, *Atlante di Schifanoia*; Bertozzi, 'Il talismano di Warburg'.

⁷⁴ Clough, 'Federigo da Montefeltro's Patronage of the Arts, 1468–1482', while on the portraiture of the duke of Urbino and its value as political metaphor, see Pauly, 'FE DVX: Studio dei ritratti del Duca di Urbino'. On the *Trionfo di Federico da Montefeltro e di Battista Sforza* by Piero della Francesca and its propagandistic intentions, on Federico's military fame from 1470 to 1479 (especially after having taken Volterra in 1472), on the political role of his wife, Battista, who died in 1472 after having given birth to the long-awaited heir, and on how the military

the *Triumphs* of Petrarch by Bernardo Illicino dedicated to Borso d'Este,⁷⁵ and those of Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini (1442–78) dedicated to Lorenzo the Magnificent,⁷⁶ both published in 1475, the genre of the triumphs found in the course of the *Quattrocento* a vast consensus and appreciation, becoming a genre particularly desirable to literati intent upon attracting the attention of *signori* in search of glory and approval. The genre of the triumph, which in the course of the sixteenth century became an obligatory element of the celebrations of courtly magnificence, had a clear ideological and political intent and was aimed at the glorification of the civic prince.⁷⁷ In this specific case, the diptych of Piero reveals a principal propagandistic and ideological meaning, in that it follows the model of political morality taken from the *Nichomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, with which Federico da Montefeltro characterizes his double mandate as both military leader and head of state.⁷⁸

The Public Ritual

Beginning with communal society, the planning of public rituals became one of the terrains on which the ruling civic classes reinforced political consensus. It was a process that moved at the same pace as the formation of the communes and that self-nourished until the early modern age. The civic tradition used celebrations and games as two methods for aggregating citizens. The agonistic military competitions, the grandiose processions, the horse races (*palii*), the chivalric spectacles, the district rivalries, the ritualistic celebrations tied to the seasons, concentrated above all in the period of *carnevale* and *calendimaggio* until the solstice in June — that is, all those manifestations generally related to the sphere of entertainment — were not simple games and rites but, rather, manifestations of social tensions and factional conflicts, expressions of contrasts between consortium groups that aimed to underline their political

leader entrusts the reins of the small state to her, see Castelli, 'Epanastrophé: il doppio "Trionfo di Federico da Montefeltro"'.

⁷⁵ Tavoni, *Da un inedito di Albano Sorbelli*.

⁷⁶ Bausi, "'Paternae artis heres'", and Bausi, 'Politica e cultura nel Commento al *Trionfo della Fama* di Jacopo Bracciolini'.

⁷⁷ The high percentage of triumphs sculpted or painted, including those that appear on household objects, such as chests, birthing tables, and headboards, is a valid testimony to the diffusion and appreciation of this subject among a large segment of the population; Strong, *Arte e potere*, pp. 7–21.

⁷⁸ Castelli, 'Il mito della città ideale nel governo federiciano'.

superiority. They were forms of representing the social structure, both the individual identities of the various bodies that made up the civic whole and the hierarchical relationships between them, as well as representations of the relationships between the dominant city and the subjected territories. The public ritual became the form of political communication through which the governing authority announced the social distinctions in order to keep, as Machiavelli writes, 'the city abundant, the *popolo* united, and the nobility honoured'.⁷⁹

But it is above all in the popular phase of the commune that the structures of government hastened to manage free time as part of a program directed toward the manufacturing of consensus. A new concept was thus established in this phase, according to which society has a need for celebrations and for games in order to not break apart: it renews itself, that is, through rituals that serve to reinforce its identity and to avoid its social disintegration. Late medieval society, still strongly marked by an agriculture-based economy even, in its principal centres of mercantile exchange, demonstrated a continuous fusion between the times and places of work and those of social relations and of celebrations. The principal phases of the agricultural cycles, such as the sowing and harvest seasons, witnessed the alternation of work with lunch, dances, and singing. Thus, in the urban spaces artisan production and training for war alternated and blended with moments of recreation. Jousts, archery, crossbow exhibitions, horse races, playful and often bloodthirsty wrestling matches, primitive soccer matches, and competitions between districts were never for pure enjoyment: they were political instruments for manufacturing consensus and for avoiding clashes which could develop into open rebellions. The town square of the *palio*, the place of the feast day celebration, the tavern, the brothel, and the public baths were all collective spaces in which individuals socialized. They were the places in which the community gave release to its impulses, in which transgression became a useful element for the acceptance of the norm of quotidian life. The urban space was characterized by places destined for the meeting of all the population in the recreational moments, but also by more restricted settings, where the single, socio-economic entities met in the area around the parrochial church, at the headquarters of the guild and the confraternity, or in the enclosed confines of prestigious residences on the occasion of important moments, such as births, weddings, or deaths.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ 'La città abbondante, unito il popolo e la nobiltà onorata': Machiavelli, 'Istorie fiorentine', ed. by Martelli, bk VIII, chap. 36, p. 843.

⁸⁰ Cardini, *Il libro delle feste*, pp. 38–53.

From the end of the *Duecento*, social bipolarization became more accentuated within the city's walls. Thus, while growing masses of individuals continued to live and spend their after-work hours in public spaces, the more affluent components of the citizenry increasingly felt the need to embellish their own houses with courtyards, colonnades, turrets, terraces with panoramic viewpoints, and rooms useful for entertaining and for displaying the fortune of its inhabitants. Games, music, dance, and song found in the public holidays and in the places dedicated to them the moment of their most efficient application, both in the collective celebration, which took place in the town squares and along the urban streets, as well as in the private celebration on the occasion of the great recurring events, to which the *popolo* was a spectator. Typical examples of collective spaces used for these entertainment purposes are found in the literary and iconographic sources relative to fourteenth-century Florence, where the square in front of the church of Santa Croce was utilized as a place of feasts and spectacles and where the backdrop setting of the Arno river was also seen as a place for amusement. A sad memory of this was the collapse of the Carraia Bridge due to the excessive weight of the spectators during the representation of *Inferno*, staged in 1304. On the occasion of the Feast of St John the Baptist in Florence, the town square dedicated to the patron saint of the city was covered at the height of about twelve metres by canvas sky supported by ropes and attached with iron hooks to the facades of the churches and surrounding buildings, in order to protect the participants from the sun's rays and in order to confer to the widening area the appearance of a unified, protected space. Dances were held in the surrounding streets, and the *palio* was run, which starts from the bridge over the Mugnone, beyond the Porta al Prato — and therefore called 'at the starting line' (*alle Mosse*) — and continued through Borgo Ognissanti, Via della Vigna Nuova, Mercato Vecchio, Via del Corso, Borgo degli Albizzi, and San Pier Maggiore.⁸¹

There are numerous other testimonies to the fact that true itineraries predisposed for the staging of recurring public events were created through the rationalization of ritual formulas and of public ceremonies. It is obvious that the sharing of common civic values was not experienced by everyone in the same way, since the feast occasions presented two different levels of possible use: on the one side, there were the protagonists; and on the other, there was the anonymous crowd of spectators. The first group was composed of the elites of the promoters, with their own entourages and their own strongly evocative

⁸¹ Cardini, *Il libro delle feste*, pp. 76–105.

emblems and signs; the second group was composed of the public, called to remain at the borders of the square with the expectation of sublimating their own impotence through the powerful, but illusory, visual participation. The exploding of the cart and soccer matches in costume in Florence, the *palio* of Siena, the Saracen Joust of Arezzo, the crossbow *palio* of Borgo San Sepolcro, the game of the bridge in Pisa, the joust of the bear in Pistoia — and, outside the confines of Tuscany, the race of the saints of Gubbio — were occasions in which archetypal messages and sacred meanings came together, to which were joined socio-political and socio-cultural signs of maximum perspicuity. Through such occasions, the ruling class was able to manage the free time of the citizens and fine-tune its program of organizing consensus.⁸²

The management of political time became an instrument of power, the goal of which was the capitalization of consensus. Every event became public and acquired special significance in the eyes of the population. The entrance into the city of illustrious guests began to gain figurative, canonical, and ritual models, in which both the governments of the *popolo* and those led by a *signore* were the protagonists. The guest rode at the head of the processions which entered triumphantly into the city; he received the keys to the city from a functionary of the commune appointed for the task; and he was praised with honours through a diplomatic code that established itself over time. Giorgio Vasari (1511–74) informs us that when Charles of Anjou (1226–85) descended into Italy to oppose Manfred on the advice of Pope Urban IV (1261–65), he passed through Florence and, more precisely, through the area of Porta San Piero, where Cimabue (c. 1240–c. 1302) usually did his canvas paintings:

of the many welcomings from the men of that city, they conducted him to see the painting of Cimabue, which having not yet been seen by anyone, and being displayed to the king, immediately there came running all the men and women of Florence, with great mirth and with the greatest crowd in the world.⁸³

⁸² Ventrone, 'Le forme dello spettacolo toscano nel Trecento', pp. 510–12, and Cardini, 'De finibus Tuscie', pp. 129–37.

⁸³ 'Fra le molte accoglienze fattegli da gli uomini di quella città, e' lo condussero a vedere la tavola di Cimabue, la quale, per ciò ch'ancora non era stata veduta da alcuno, mostrandosi al re, subito vi concorsero tutti gli uomini e tutte le donne di Fiorenza, con grandissima festa e con la maggior calca del mondo': Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, ed. by Bellosi and Rossi, p. 106. It is interesting how Vasari underlines the importance of Charles's passage through that area of the city, and how it is remembered in the collective memory of the Florentines as a joyful moment, because, 'for this, because of the joy of the people in that area, they called that place Borgo Allegri, which in time came to be included within the city walls, and the name remained' (Laonde, per l'allegrezza che n'ebbero i vicini, chiamarono quel luogo

The entrance into the city implicated the passage through the civic gates; the gates in turn symbolically represented the entire system of walls of the whole community dwelling within them. The gates of the city were utilized as places of passage and as symbols of a long building commitment embraced by the public authorities, as attested the case of Reggio Emilia: from 1199 to 1242 the names of the *podestà* who built the city gates were inscribed on them with the goal of underlining their solicitude in the name of the common good as promoters of the city's construction.⁸⁴ When Henry VII was elected emperor in 1308 and in 1311 decided to descend into Italy, the gates of the city opened towards he who had the power to 'straighten out Italy'.⁸⁵ In Arezzo, the bishop Guido Tarlati designated Buonamico di Martino detto Buffalmacco to paint on one of the facades of his palace an apology for imperial power, a fresco whose inspirational motives were repeated on the entrances of the city walls of 1319.⁸⁶ With this gesture the Ghibelline bishop consolidated his own political position over the city, emphasizing, with the symbol of the eagle in the act of overwhelming the symbol of the Guelph party, the will of reacting against the Guelph and enemy city of Florence. It was an eagle, as Franco Sacchetti writes, 'that seems alive, that was on top of a lion that it has killed'.⁸⁷ Giovanni Villani writes that in Florence, for the rise to power of Walter of Brienne, duke of Athens and *signore* of the city from 1342 to 1343, the Florentines involved in the festivities in honour of the new lord requested not only the authorities of the commune but also those of several of the major centres of its territory to participate in the 'great celebration with great fanfare for the citizens and its allied barons and soldiers'.⁸⁸ The celebration of the feast days and of the recurring civic and religious holidays was always marked by precise ceremonies with definite moments of passage, as yet again Villani gives testimony when he writes of the staging of the 'jousts in the square of Santa Croce for several days'.⁸⁹

Borgo Allegri, il quale col tempo messo fra le mura della città, sempr'ha tenuto quel nome) (p. 106). English translation is mine.

⁸⁴ Settia, 'Cerchie murarie e torri private urbane', p. 55.

⁸⁵ 'Drizzare Italia': Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Paradiso*, xxx. 136.

⁸⁶ Cherici, 'Buffalmacco, Guido Tarlati, Agnolo e Agostino e la porta di S. Angelo'.

⁸⁷ 'Che paresse viva che fosse a dosso a un leone e avesselo morto': Sacchetti, *Il Trecento-novelle*, ed. by Marucci, novella CLXI, 536.

⁸⁸ 'Gran festa a' cittadini e suoi baroni conostaboli e soldati con grandi corredi': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 8.

⁸⁹ 'Giostre nella piazza di Santa Croce per più dì': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 8.

Between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, the major Italian cities became the theatre of ceremonies and street parades in which the network of city roads was perceived as a collective recreational space, where the wealthiest classes of the city showed themselves off in festive processions, giving life to a type of engaging spectacle in which the line of separation between protagonists and public became progressively less noticeable. The transformation of the city into a theatre of power induced the modification of the usual appearance of city roads and squares along which the *cortège* travels through provisional covers and decorations. The different forms of the civic rituals became occasions for work for artists designated to decorate and stage the event using temporary furnishings made from extremely ephemeral materials, such as plaster, papier-mâché, leather, and wax. With the advent of the government of the *popolo*, the public manifestations became a form of epiphany of power to be organized spectacularly in order to underline the civic magnificence and to obtain the consensus of the citizenry. The *Diario fiorentino*, written by Bartolomeo del Corazza (1381–1449), provides a precise account of the ceremonies witnessed by the Florentine wine-seller between 1405 and 1439, underlining their importance among the largest classes of the city's population and how, through these political instruments, the political authority reached legitimization and credibility by means of clear symbolic signifiers.⁹⁰ In December of 1326 the ceremony for the assumption of knighthood status of Francesco di messer Sozzo Bandinelli was celebrated in Siena. The chronicler Agnolo di Tura del Grasso explains that at the ceremony a great number of the city's elite participated, and that the luxury desired by the organizers was accompanied by the desire to spread concord, civic pride, and the sense of freedom among the participating citizens.⁹¹

The arrival of guests on the occasion of official visits was accompanied in Venice by the political magistracies and by a throng of citizens. The itineraries

⁹⁰ Bartolomeo del Corazza, *Diario fiorentino (1405–1439)*, ed. by Gentile. In the same way in Venice, the historian and statesman Marin Sanudo (1466–1536) allowed us to insert the hundreds of public ceremonies organized by the government of the *Serenissima* between 1496 and 1533 into the sphere of political celebration, whose social impact was determined by its capacity to aggregate through this type of public communication. On how in Florence and Venice during the Renaissance these celebrations were utilized as moments of political cohesion in order to impose the seal of the state onto society, see Casini, *I gesti del principe*.

⁹¹ 'Poremo di per di ordinatamente tutte le nobiltà, gentileze, triunphi e magnificentie che si faranno in deta cavallaria e sì de' conviti, desinari, invitati e così de le vivande che si presenteranno partitamente, acioché si possino comprendere e gustare, e di quanta magnificentia era Siena in quel tempo': Agnolo di Tura del Grasso, 'Cronica senese', ed. by Lisini and Iacometti, p. 442.

and the procedure of the procession on the water began to be pre-established from the end of the thirteenth century, so that the ceremonial ship of the *doge*, the *Bucintoro*, arrived at the small island of San Clemente and then proceeded to the Grand Canal where spectacles were organized, allegorical figures were projected utilizing watercraft, and where games and burlesque productions followed one another in succession to the joyous thrill of the population. The same procession of the *doge* took place unchanged in its perfect order, thereby imposing upon Venetians an image of continuity and harmony aimed at masking the reality of the struggle for power. The processions, according to a ritual extensively orchestrated by the civic statutes, constituted a moment of aggregation which was fundamental for the participants, a moment motivated by both religious sentiments and civic pride: just as, for the arrival of important people, the processions opened with the ecclesiastics who raised the banner of the republic, followed by the *podestà*, the Elders, and, finally, by the guilds in solemn hierarchical order that was highlighted in the symbols of the various flags and candles being offered. The painted or finely embroidered standards that were carried in the procession were an artistic genre closely tied by form and content to the paintings of the churches, venerated and safeguarded with care. A public text from 1459 established the network of relationships which equates the *doge* to the State, the honour of the State to the reputation of Venice, the State and its honour to the strict regulation of the processions in the space of St Marks's square.⁹²

For the arrival in the city of Pope Gregory XII from September 1407 to January 1408, and again later that year from July to October, the Sieneese authorities organized celebrations and games; Enea Silvio Piccolomini provided the narration in his *Historia de duobus amantibus* of the arrival of Emperor Sigismondo in 1432; again in Siena, for the visit of Emperor Frederick III and of Eleanor of Portugal in February of 1452, the city availed itself to the leadership of the same Piccolomini, then bishop of Siena and at the same time friend, collaborator, and confidant of the sovereign. When Frederick III arrived in Florence on 14 December 1451, a procession crossed the entire city before arriving at the cathedral, the greatest tribute that could be paid to a guest in Florence.⁹³ The civic architecture became the preeminent scenic location of political life, as seen in the frieze of the Gualdrada room in the apartment of Eleanor of Toledo in Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, where at the base of the ceiling

⁹² Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, p. 190. On the forms of religious ritual, see Goody, 'Religion and Ritual'.

⁹³ Mantini, *Lo spazio sacro della Firenze medicea*, pp. 95–96.

there runs a pictorial decoration by Giovanni Stradano (1523–1605) with views of the town squares and streets of the city on the occasion of public events.⁹⁴

In Florence the long and complex procedure of the election of priors was established by the statutes of 1415, according to a ritual ceremony that had its centre in the dual system of the counting of votes and the extraction of names by lot. The investiture of the *Signoria*, the most important office of the city, took place every two months in secret in the 'Hall of the Great Council' (*Sala del Gran Consiglio*), the *Sala del Dugento* in Palazzo Vecchio. Following the solemnity of the secret counting of votes was the progressive passage toward the public sphere, with the spectacle of the official enthronement of the priors and of the Gonfalonier of Justice in *Piazza della Signoria*. To honour the entrance of the new executive body, all work was suspended, the shops were closed, the storerooms of merchants remained barred shut until 9 o'clock in the morning of the following day, and the *popolo* was invited to gather in the political heart of the city in front of the palace of the priors. There, in the place that tangibly expressed the civic ideology, musicians were employed and banners were hung from the railing of *Palazzo della Signoria*; and between 1376 and 1382 the *Loggia della Signoria* was constructed in order to provide shelter for the protagonists of the festivities. At the peal of the bells, the new priors were accompanied by the outgoing priors. They descended the steps of the palace down to the railing, where the main actors of Florentine political life hierarchically took their places: the Gonfalonier of Justice, the *podestà*, the captain of the *popolo*, the executor of the Ordinances of justice, and finally the priors themselves, at whose feet were seated the citizens who guaranteed the correct proceedings of the entire ceremony. Once the standard of justice was raised and the crown was placed on the famous lion and symbol of republican Florence, the *Marzocco*, the new priors were invited to swear loyalty aloud on the Holy Scriptures, to respect divine law and the law of the Florentine commune formalized in the Ordinances of Justice, in the statutes, and in the Guelph Party.⁹⁵

In Venice the rituals surrounding the crowning of the new *doge* always took place in front of a large crowd, while illuminations and fireworks of joy were lit around the city. The election of the new *doge* was announced by the peal of bells, by the interruption of work, by the closing of shops, and by the elated citizens who headed towards St Mark's Square, where the new *doge* showed himself to the *popolo* from the gallery. The election ritual called for acclamation of the *doge* with the goal of formally showing the collective adhesion to the participation of

⁹⁴ Zorzi, 'Figurazione pittorica e figurazione teatrale'.

⁹⁵ Taddei, 'Il leone, la corona e lo stendardo', pp. 48–53.

the popular assembly (*arengo*), which until 1297 was entitled to choose the *doge*. After mass is celebrated, the *doge* received St Mark's standard, showing to everyone that he accepted the responsibility of its safekeeping for the duration of his life: the standard was the symbol of the absolute and eternal authority from which was derived the legitimacy of government. Then began a second phase of the ritual, in which the *doge* took his place on a wooden platform and then, with two of his closest relatives and the admiral of the Arsenal, began to walk around the square while workers of the shipyard cleared a path through the crowd. From the platform, the *doge* threw coins to the crowd, an act that followed the coronation ceremony in the hall of the Senate, which, since the election of Marco Barbarigo in 1485, took place in the open court of the *doge's* palace.⁹⁶

In Milan, the cult of Ambrose had been present since the Carolingian age and contributed to the creation of the city's identity. Over time the construction of the basilica and the realization of the altar dedicated to the saint represented one of the symbolically strongest forms of Milanese identity. The ceremony of coronation of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, duke of the city from 1395 to 1402, took place in the basilica, so that the power of the duke was absorbed by the crowd observing the imperial power. With Gian Galeazzo, the figure of the monarch was rendered sacred through proposing to the citizenry the image of the sovereign as capable of subordinating the powerful figures of the state and of transforming vassals into subjects. With Filippo Maria Visconti, duke of Milan from 1412 to 1447, this characteristic, necessary for the legitimization of the sovereign, was accentuated, and the monarch, by breaking up lands and conquering castles and villages, underlined the feudal relationship, absorbing forms of personal dependence (such as those of vassalage) in the impersonal subordination of the feudatory-subject to the territorial and public authority of the duke. As in previous instances, also in the case of the duchy of Milan, the role of the prince who negotiates the approval of the diverse political and territorial bodies that comprise the domination was framed in the larger mosaic of the construction of the regional Milanese state.⁹⁷

Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the pontifical state developed a progressive, monarchic ideology according to which the person of the pope, a spiritual and progressively political figure, embodied the state and its citizens. With Pope Gregory VII and his *Dictatus Papae* of 1075, the fullness

⁹⁶ Pertusi, "Quedam regalia insignia", pp. 64–81; Cessi, 'L'investitura ducale'; and Fasoli, 'Liturgia e cerimonia ducale'.

⁹⁷ De Blaauw, 'Il culto di Sant'Ambrogio e l'altare della Basilica Ambrosiana a Milano'; Moly, 'Rituale sacro e autorità ducale'; and Cengarle, *Immagine di potere e prassi di governo*.

of power (*plenitudo potestatis*) was attributed to the pontiff, and the dependence on Rome of all bishops was formally established. The model became the celestial order, because as Christ was the origin of every *potestas* — as both God and, at the same time, holder of power as man — so his vicar on the Earth exercised full authority, both spiritual and secular. The two powers remained conceptually distinct, but they were both united in the person of the pope. With the coronation ceremony, the pontiff had the power to delegate the exercise of secular power to sovereigns (*potestas indirecta*), but he could revoke the proxy and reassume control of such powers following actions which were in contrast with the magisterium of the Church (*potestas directa*).⁹⁸ With Innocent III (1198–1216), the Papal States began to come out of the Roman sphere in order to assume a new interregional character that was then lost with the losing of control of a large part of its own territories during the Avignon Papacy (1309–77). Between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the state of the Church was fractioned into a series of local potentates, which the grip of post-schism conciliarism and the reinforcement of civic feudal and seignorial powers were unable to resolve. The features of the pope-king were clearly outlined for the first time by Urban IV (1431–47) and then by Nicholas V (1447–55). After the papacy of the latter, the papal ceremony became more and more central to the legitimization of power and entered into an unprecedented process of glorification and, at the same time, secularization. Vespasiano da Bisticci writes about Nicholas V:

It was the pope to sit in his seat, where there were all of the College of Cardinals, and all of the court of Rome, and all of the legates. Once the pope was seated, there came the emperor in his presence, and upon seeing the pope he immediately kneeled on the ground; coming before the pontiff, he kissed the right foot and the right hand of the pope, who then bent forward and kissed him on the right side.⁹⁹

The body of the pope personified the monarchic ideology hidden behind the spiritual power of the papacy. The passage from the theorization of the papal monarchy to the concrete political embodiment of the sovereign-pope took flight with Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Pope Pius II (1458–64). The most sym-

⁹⁸ Fantoni, *Il potere dello spazio*, pp. 133–36.

⁹⁹ ‘Era il papa a sedere nella sua sedia, dove era tutto il collegio de’ cardinali, et tutta la corte di Roma, et tutti e’ legati che v’erano. Istando il papa a sedere, venne lo ’mperadore nel cospetto del papa, et veduto il papa subito s’inginocchiò in terra; venendo inanzi al pontefice, gli baciò il piè destro et la mano destra, di poi il papa si chinò et baciollo dal lato ritto’: Vespasiano da Bisticci, ‘Vita di Nicolao P.P.V.’, ed. by Greco, p. 73.

bolic episode among many possible examples is the procession of the *Corpus Domini* organized in Rome on 17 June 1462, an occasion in which the pontiff became the director of the scenic design of his own sovereignty: paraphrasing the coming of God as sung in the psalm ('Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of Glory shall enter in. Who is this King of Glory? the Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory'¹⁰⁰), the actors who pretended to impede his entrance asked 'who is this Pius king?';¹⁰¹ while others dressed as angels responded, playing on the fact that the pope carried the Sacrament in procession, 'the ruler of the world'.¹⁰² The form and the function of the festivities prepared on an urban scale in Rome, but also in Viterbo, Pienza, and Siena, during the papacy of Pio II Piccolomini are an example of communication concretely aimed at the capitalization of political consensus.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ 'Levate capita vestra et elevamini portae eternelles et introibit rex gloriae. Quis est iste rex gloriae? Dominus fortis et potens': *Psalm 23*. 7–8.

¹⁰¹ 'Chi è questo re Pio?' Pius II, *The Commentaries*, ed. by Gabel, iv, 551. On this topic, cf. also Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, pp. 92–98.

¹⁰² 'Il signore del mondo': Pius II, *The Commentaries*, ed. by Gabel, iv, 551.

¹⁰³ Nevola, "La più gloriosa solennità che a di de Padri nostri giammai fussi veduta".

THE SACRED NATURE OF THE SOCIAL BODY

Inside and Outside:

The Exclusion of 'Diversity' from the Sacred Body of the Community

The intrinsic political power of every community understood as a mystical body cannot be put at risk. The social body is sacred, just as is the space that contains it. Whoever places himself outside of this axiom violates the series of shared rules, and this was the foundation of Italian cities between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. He who threatened the *bonum commune* could not remain within the civic union, as he was an element of disturbance for which he must be expelled. The dichotomy between the urban centre and the periphery, between inside and outside, was very strong in this period, and it was through this image of spatial differentiation — an essential part of social organization — that the repression of murderers, thieves, homosexuals, heretics, and political dissidents could be legitimized. Included in the diversity that leads to this repression were all those who transgress shared juridical norms, who threatened ethical standards, and who strove to subvert customs and traditions on which the universal principles recognized by society rested. Anyone who jeopardized the public good undermined the unity of the community and automatically authorized that same community to repress him. The unity of the community must be safeguarded, and the violence against the dissident as a countermeasure to the threat became a sacred act because, as René Girard underlines, 'generative unanimity is a process for changing bad violence into stability and fecundity'.¹

¹ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 266. On this theme, see Martines, *Violence and Civil*

The circle of walls marks the boundary between order and chaos, between organized space and savage nature, between good and bad, and with specific legislation it defines the expulsion ritual of the criminal from the social body as an unalienable right. Forced to escape, the excluded individual becomes a man without a state, a man who, as a declared enemy of the community, is deprived not only of belonging to the collective identity which is present in every society but also of its symbols, of its boundaries, of its internal itineraries, and of its spatial hierarchies. Exclusion implies, then, being removed from the sacred space contained within the constituted order, from the space that lies inside the city walls, and even from the space that is projected onto the setting of the surrounding territory controlled by the city. This is the space that protects the relics of the saints and the symbols of power in which all of the community is identified. Exclusion implies the deprivation of the urban space — defined by the walls that defend against enemies and ensure civil and spiritual protection — which regulates the rhythms of community life inside and outside the walls, and which, in the collective imagination, is identified with living in a stable dwelling, durably rooted in the same place according to bonds of family and of neighbourhood. To be excluded means, therefore, to not be protected, to be projected towards a world that gravitates beyond the physical and imaginary confines represented by the city and its territory, towards a place contemplated as the opposite of order, as deconsecrated, and thus placed beyond the unanimously recognized and shared spaces.

In communal society, the precepts dictated by Isidore of Seville (†636) in his *Etymologiarum sive originum libri* are widespread: according to these precepts, cities are not only the physical expression of space, but also of the group of citizens bound together by social ties. Isidore calls *urbs* the physical space of the walls, while with *civitas* he designates the men who inhabit them.² Communal society continuously defines its own identity of membership according to shared symbolologies, and rituals that are confirmed by preachers, as well, such as Giordano da Pisa (1260–1311): in a sermon from 1304, in fact, the Dominican friar highlights several times that man ‘is called a social and congregational ani-

Disorder in Italian Cities; Bruni, *La città divisa*; and Cohn and Ricciardelli, *The Culture of Violence in Renaissance Italy*. On the language of the common good, see *Il bene comune: forme di governo e gerarchie sociali*.

² ‘Civitas est hominum multitudo societatis vinculo adunata, dicta a civibus, id est ab ipsis incolis urbis [pro eo quod plurimorum consciscat et contineat vitas]. Nam urbs ipsa moenia sunt, civitas autem non saxa, sed abitatores vocantur’: Isidore of Seville, *Etimologie o origini*, ed. by Valastro Canale, bk xv.II.1 (II, 252). On the theme of *civitas*, see Luscombe, ‘City and Politics before the Coming of the Politics’.

mal [...] for the help that one gives to others [...] and this was the reason why castles and cities, villages and families were made'.³

Jerusalem provided a convenient metaphor for the sacred city in the collective imagination of those who lived in communal societies:

Its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide [...]. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone [...]. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass [...]. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it.⁴

Starting with the end of the twelfth century, northern and central Italian communes copied buildings and replicated dedications and relics from Jerusalem.⁵ Referring to the complex of Santo Stefano in Bologna, Robert G. Ousterhout asserts that between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in a period of rapid growth and emerging civic consciousness, 'the identity of Bologna as a city gains credibility and lustre through the symbolic association with the ideal city of the Middle Ages — that is, Jerusalem in its heavenly and earthly aspects'.⁶ The sacred space of northern and central Italian communes was delimited concentrically as that of Jerusalem, as recalled by the preaching of Urban II (c. 1040–99) in the time of the First Crusade and, more specifically, in a sentence attributed to him by Robert of Reims in 1095, in which the pontiff defines the preeminent holy city as a circle, the 'heart of the Earth, placed at the centre of the world'.⁷

³ 'È detto animale sociale e congregale [...] per l'aiuto che l'uno ha dall'altro [...] e questa fue la cagione perché si fecieno le castella e le cittadi, e' borghi e le famiglie': Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite del B. Giordano da Rivalto dell'Ordine de' Predicatori*, ed. by Narducci, p. 85.

⁴ John 22. 11–24.

⁵ For Jerusalem as urban archetype in the Western world, see Galletti, 'Gerusalemme o la città desiderata'.

⁶ Ousterhout, 'The Church of Santo Stefano', p. 100, and the whole article on the representation of the medieval city as a re-proposal of Jerusalem.

⁷ 'Umbilicus terrarum [...] in orbis medio posita': quoted in Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, p. 4.

But Jerusalem, the symbolic focal point of Christianity for the presence of the Holy Sepulchre and, therefore, a destination of spiritual pilgrimage, was not the only city that in the communal age was seen as ideal. Rome, too, was in fact idealized in the imagination of medieval men, such as it was capable of projecting the universality of imperial power onto the Christian Church, understood as the only supranational institution and thus also universal. The walled city distinguished itself from the external chaos and solitude as a place of churches and of men (naturally of God) separated by the wall from the surrounding space not marked by human activity and thus a space inhabited by demons.⁸ The *limen* was defined by the city walls and became the frontier zone beyond which were believed to reside the inhuman forces of evil (usually serpents and dragons) which were forced to retreat following the foundation of the Eternal City because of man's need for settlement.⁹

The civic space, protected within its confines, became sacred just like any other religious space. There were numerous examples from coeval painting, such as the *Entrance into Jerusalem* (*Entrata a Gerusalemme*) by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255–1318). In this work, Duccio helps us to understand how clearly present was the ideal barrier that existed between the internal settlement and the external world between the second half of the *Duecento* and the first half of the following century. The entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, placed together with twenty-four other images portraying the *Stories of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ* (*Storie della Passione e Resurrezione di Cristo*, 1308–11) on the other side of the famous *Maestà*, was envisioned by the master as taking place in Siena. Thus, other symbols replaced those of Jerusalem, such as the inventive but exemplifying reproduction of the dome of the Cathedral of Siena. The example of the city as a sacred space was proposed repeatedly during the course of the *Quattrocento* with numerous examples, such as the one that can be taken from the virtuosity of Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510), who, in his *Crucifixion* today housed in the Fogg Museum of Art of Harvard University, proposes as the background for the image of Christ a Florence inundated with

On the circle as a symbol of perfection in the medieval collective imagination, I refer you to the first chapter ('Un cerchio vuoto') of Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 3–33.

⁸ Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 9–10.

⁹ Benvenuti, 'Draghi e confini, rogazioni e litanie', where she writes that the 'percezione di questo confine al di là del quale il caos naturale poteva produrre mostri distruttori ed ostili, come i draghi creatori ed abitatori di desolazioni palustri, è elemento importante per comprendere i riti lustrali con cui si rinnovava, periodicamente, la barriera ideale interposta tra l'insediamento ed il mondo esterno' (p. 50). See also Benvenuti, "'Santuario': un percorso semantico'.

light emanating from the open book of the Eternal Father high in the heavens, as crusader shields, the symbol of the commune, rain down on the city.¹⁰

In the course of the Middle Ages, the city walls indicated more and more decisively the boundary between order and chaos, between organized space and the untamed natural world. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the communal experience found its own natural evolution in the territorial states, these perceptions were opened to new perspectives. The city began to be perceived as both a place of social aggregation and as an enlarged reproduction of the home, almost the effect of the multiplication of the modular housing unit. Along these lines, Leon Battista Alberti, in his *De re aedificatoria* (1450), perceives the city as the pre-eminent place to enjoy together because 'the city is like a great house, and the house in its turn a small city'.¹¹

In the late Middle Ages, the practice of carrying out capital executions outside of the city walls began to establish itself so as to not disturb the peaceful activities of life regulated by laws and in order to avoid contamination of the world of good with world of evil. The spectacle of death, aimed at deterring dissidence and social deviance, began to occur systematically outside the defensive walls in those places inhabited by the inhumane forces of evil, kept out thanks to the boundary that man himself had designed in the moment of foundation.¹² Utilizing the extra-civic space, the capital executions underlined the existence of the *limen* between the spheres of good and evil. Of all the useable examples on this subject, I believe the most illustrative scenes to be those painted by Guido di Pietro Trosini (1395–1455), the Dominican friar better known as Beato Angelico, who in his *Crucifixion of Saints Cosmas and Damian* (*Crocifissione e lapidazione dei santi Cosma e Damiano*) and in his *Decapitation of Saints Cosmas and Damian* (*Decapitazione dei santi Cosma e Damiano*) describes the executions of the saints visibly outside the city walls, thereby synthesizing a tradition that in the course of the fifteenth century consolidates its own propaedeutics.¹³

¹⁰ On the city of Florence as a celestial Jerusalem, see Burroughs, 'The Altar and the City', in particular pp. 17–18.

¹¹ 'Perchioche se la Città secondo la sentenza de' Filosofi è una certa casa grande, e per l'opposito essa casa è una piccola Città; perché non diren noi, che i membri di essa son quasi Casipole, come è il Cortile, le Loggie, la Sala, il Portico e simili': Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, ed. by Orlandi, I, 9.

¹² Benvenuti, 'Draghi e confini, rogazioni e litanie', p. 50.

¹³ The methods of imposing justice and the intensity of the punishments are not any less violent than the criminals, as evidenced by the examples of Brunì, *La città divisa*, pp. 292–97.

The Centrality of Justice

Beginning with the phase of the commune of the *podestà*, the civic administrations set aside great attention for the rationalization and maintenance of civil concord. New values emerged based on the centrality of the new public official and on his task of governing according to lawfulness and probity. The rules of civil co-existence called for shared values according to the principle of the *ius suum cuiusque*, because giving to everyone that which was owed to him meant subordinating personal interest and guaranteeing the common good. The great theme of communal society became that of reaching social peace and of searching for civil concord which must oppose internal divisions and discord. Justice became the founding principle of society without which the social balance and the common good could not be attained. What is known as *podestà* literature, which developed in the major communes of central and northern Italy beginning in the thirteenth century, reveals a general tendency to dictate rules for a concrete understanding of the political reality through the utilization of a series of authoritative quotations taken from ancient writers and philosophers.¹⁴

In Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*, one of the sources most utilized by Italian jurists in the *Duecento*, the theme of the greatness of Rome is related to the example of the king of Numidia Giugurta, who leaves to his two heirs a kingdom to govern in striving for the common good through the founding principles of civil concord. It is this concord that makes any society worthy of being defined as such, according to the axiom which states that even small things grow in concord, while in discord even the greatest things are destroyed.¹⁵ Cicero, who was widely used by jurists of the late Middle Ages, insists on the fact that the preservation of civil concord can be found only in eloquence since it is the only ability capable of countering the strength of weaponry. At a moment in which in Rome the republic is in a state of disrepair, the attaining of civil concord is for Cicero tied to the capacity of the government to guide the citizens

On the images of violence and their emotional impact, see Ortalli, 'Pingatur in Palatio'; Edgerton, 'Icons of Justice'; Edgerton, *Pictures and Punishment*. On the peculiarities of the rituals of violence, see Zorzi, 'Rituali di violenza'. On the propaedeutics of justice, see Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata*.

¹⁴ On the language of the common good, see Kempshall, 'The Language of the Common Good in Scholastic Political Thought'.

¹⁵ 'Equidem ego vobis regnum trado firmum, si boni eritis, sin mali, imbecillum. Nam concordia parve res crescunt, discordia maxumae dilabuntur': Sallustio Crispo, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, ed. by Ciaffi, p. 136.

in the search of common good, renouncing personal interests to the advantage of public interests, putting before every other priority the *bonum commune* or, as the orator of Arpinum writes, the *communes utilitates*. Even Cicero asks the Roman magistrates to protect the good of the citizenry, forgetting about their own benefit, taking care of the entire body of the state, attending to one part without neglecting the others.¹⁶ Cicero proposes as an instrument of political resolution the *concordia ordinum*, affirming that those who attend to only a part of the citizenry introduce into the state an ailment which nourishes itself on sedition and discord.¹⁷

Both Sallust and Cicero underline that in every society the common good (*bonum commune*) is always tied to the correct exercise of justice. Sallust sustains, in his *Bellum Catilinae*, that the Roman republic became great thanks to its tenacity, to its rectitude, and to its judiciary system.¹⁸ Cicero, at the beginning of his *De officiis*, declares that the justice system is the most important means by which human society and social union are preserved.¹⁹ It is St Augustine (364–430) who transmits these principles to communal society, putting the exercise of justice in relation to the new divine order. He underlines that civil concord can be reached only through the promotion of harmony between social classes, to be guaranteed with the well-balanced exercise of justice, no longer sought out in the nature of God but rather in his will. In the second book of *De civitate Dei* (composed between 412 and 426), the Christian thinker writes that

as in a concert of zithers and flutes and in the singing voice itself, it is necessary to maintain a certain harmony among the various sounds in order to not offend the ear of the good listener with monotone or dissonance, and the concert is rendered harmonic and suitable by the ordered contribution of diverse sounds and voices, such that in the well-regulated relationships between the most noble, the most inferior and the middle classes, and in the agreement of the most diverse parts, the city finds its harmony. That which musicians call in song “harmony” is called

¹⁶ ‘Unum, ut utilitatem civium sic tueantur, ut quaecumque agunt, ad eam referant obliti commodorum suorum, alterum, ut totum corpus rei publicae curent, ne, dum partem aliquam tuentur, reliquas deserant’: Cicero, *I doveri*, ed. by Narducci, bk I, chap. 85, p. 150.

¹⁷ ‘Qui autem parti civium consulunt, partem neglegunt, rem perniciosissimam in civitatem inducunt, seditionem atque discordiam’: Cicero, *I doveri*, ed. by Narducci, bk I, chap. 85, p. 150. On this theme, I refer the reader to Narducci, *Cicerone e l’eloquenza romana*, pp. 77–96.

¹⁸ ‘Labore atque iustitia res publica crevit’: Sallustio Crispo, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, ed. by Ciaffi, p. 16.

¹⁹ ‘Qua scietas hominum inter ipsos et vitae quasi communitatis continetur’: Cicero, *I doveri*, ed. by Narducci, bk I, chap. 20, p. 90.

“concord” in the city, and it is the strongest and best bond for the well-being and the salvation of the entire state; but this link cannot be attained without justice.²⁰

The treatises on civic government specifically intended to guide the *podestà* placed the justice system at the centre of the common good and discussed as of secondary importance the forms of government able to guarantee such a social condition. The majority of writings of this kind, originally a collateral branch of the *ars dictaminis*, contained exemplary letters and discussions in addition to general advice on how to manage the affairs of the city. The best form of civic constitution that led to the common good was obtained by leaving the administration of politics and of the justice system in the hands of elected public officials. There are numerous writers who speak of the goals and objectives of the community, whose aim consists of attaining the common good, translatable in terms of political stability along with public and private wealth. These themes are discussed at length in the works of Albertano da Brescia (late twelfth century to after 1253), who in 1245 wrote *De arte loquendi et tacendi*;²¹ and in those of Orfino da Lodi (1190–1250/52),²² the imperial functionary who maintained close ties with the Swabian dynasty during the course of his political career. The latter, who after a brief period of apprenticeship in Lodi resided in important urban centres of communal society such as Bologna, Foligno and Macerata, theorizes the necessity to create an appropriate curriculum for the ruling classes of communal society. Once he became imperial vicar in the March of Ancona, he put to use his experience as an educator of the new ruling classes of communal society in his *De regimine et sapientia potestatis*.²³ With the subterfuge of educating his son, Orfino outlined the ideal profile of the figure of the *podestà*, and thus of the virtuous political man, striking a balance between moral reflection and teaching by common precepts. The number of sections with juridical subjects is an indication of the more general interest

²⁰ ‘Ut in fidibus aut tibiis atque cantu ipso ac vocibus concentus est quidam tenendum ex distinctis sonis, quem inmutatum aut discrepantem aures eruditae ferre non possunt, isque concentus ex dissimillarum vocum moderatione concors tamen efficitur et congruens: sic ex summis et infimi set mediis interiectis ordinibus, ut sonis, moderata ratione civitatem consensio dissimillimorum concinere, et quae armonia a musicis dicitur in cantu, eam esse in civitate concordiam, artissimum atque optimum omni in re publica vinculum incolumitatis, eamque sine iustitia nullo pacto esse posse’: Augustine, *La città di Dio*, ed. by Borgogno, bk II, para. 21, p. 126. The reference is to Cicero, *La Repubblica*, ed. by Nenci, bk II, chaps 42 and 43, pp. 395–96.

²¹ Pastore Stocchi, ‘Albertano da Brescia’.

²² Orfino da Lodi, *De regimine et sapientia potestatis*, ed. by Pozzi.

²³ On Orfino da Lodi, see Caretta, ‘Contributo ad Orfino da Lodi’.

in one of the central themes in the thought and legislative activity of Frederick II, that of justice.²⁴

The internal divisions and the creation of a balanced justice system inspired an anonymous author to publish the *Oculus pastoralis* (c. 1222), which opens with a series of model speeches for the use of any new *podestà*, warning them, in particular, to act in such a way that their government contributes to 'increase the glory and to assure that the city will become great'.²⁵ The *podestà*, even if theoretically representing a shortcut toward the verticalization of society with the *signore*, must be able to promote 'the well-being of the entire community [guaranteeing] honour, prestige, prosperity and happiness'.²⁶ The same motivations induced John of Viterbo to write *Liber de regimine civitatum* in 1253, the treatise that confirms the risks that governments run when social peace is threatened. He sustains that 'in this day and age all cities are afflicted by internal divisions [so much so that] the good effect of government won't last long'.²⁷ The system of justice, writes John, must be the guarantor of social harmony because 'cities govern themselves and maintain a state of peace [...] thanks to which they can develop themselves, become great and expand themselves as much as possible'.²⁸ He puts emphasis on the importance of 'growth' and on the essential task of guaranteeing peace and prosperity.²⁹

In Bologna, in a model speech written for the heads of the civic militia, Matteo de' Libri (1214–75) offers the same advice, inviting the magistrates and governors of the communal age to put an end to the clashes between internal factions in order to avoid ending up like Florence, Siena, and Rimini, cities conditioned by internal hatred and neighbourhood rivalries.³⁰ Matteo advises

²⁴ My reference is to the sections entitled *De iudicibus* (vv. 797–997), *Regule iuris* (vv. 998–1239), and *De causidicis* (vv. 1240–1382), published respectively in Orfino da Lodi, *De regimine et sapientia potestatis*, ed. by Pozzi, pp. 134–68, 168–92, and 192–206.

²⁵ 'Ad incrementum et gloriam et honorem [...] excrescit civitas': *Oculus pastoralis*, ed. by Franceschi, pp. 25 and 27.

²⁶ 'Pro utilitate communitatis istius [...] ad honorem, exaltationem et commodum ac felicem statum': *Oculus pastoralis*, ed. by Franceschi, p. 26.

²⁷ 'Nam cum civitates omnes hodie sunt divise [...] esset bonus effectus regiminis': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, p. 221.

²⁸ 'Civitates reguntur et tenentur pacifice, crescunt, ditantur et maximum recipiunt incrementum': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, p. 231.

²⁹ 'Univitates crescunt': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, p. 231. On the importance of the 'incrementum' and of the 'maximum incrementum', cf. p. 232.

³⁰ 'Pensative de Florencia, de Sena, commo son gite per la guerra dentro [...] Pensative de

the captains of the *popolo* of his city to remind the parties in question that 'concord and internal unity help to increase the common good'.³¹ He then suggests to ambassadors and to *podestàs* to 'guarantee growth and development' which assure 'good state greatness and prosperity'.³² In the 1290s, Giovanni da Vignano, in a model speech for outgoing *podestàs*, requests these officials to express the hope that the city they administrated in prosperity would continue to grow and develop forever.³³ He exhorts ambassadors and magistrates to praise the greatness and beauty of their city³⁴ and, at the same time, the unity of all its citizens.³⁵ And still again John of Viterbo writes in his *Liber de regimine civitatum* that the first duty of the *podestà* is 'to give to each his own and to govern the city according to justice and fairness'.³⁶ The importance of this principle, as yet again one of his model speeches demonstrates, lies in the fact that 'the cities governed by these constraints of justice become great, wealthy, and experience the maximum growth'.³⁷

Following in this tradition are the works of Brunetto Latini (c. 1220–94), Albertino Mussato (1261–1329), and Filippo Ceffi (thirteenth century–c. 1330). In his *Trésor*, Brunetto Latini suggests the centrality of civil concord to public administrators and invites the *podestà*, defined impersonally as *signore*, to accept a series of recommendations and to become the recipient of a clearly defined project for educating the citizens in the area of political science. According to the Florentine notary of the Guelph party, the *podestà* must promote civil concord and carefully avoid war, which is always counterproductive and destruc-

Rimino, comm'è sono per l'odio dentro, e de multe terre de quella contrata': Matteo de' Libri, *Arringhe*, ed. by Vincenti, p. 147.

³¹ 'La concordia et l'unitate acrese et avança tuti bene': Matteo de' Libri, *Arringhe*, ed. by Vincenti, p. 18.

³² 'Acresimento de ben en meglio [...] bon stato, grandeça et acresemento': Matteo de' Libri, *Arringhe*, ed. by Vincenti, pp. 10 and 70.

³³ Giovanni da Vignano, *Flore de parlare*, ed. by Vincenti, p. 286.

³⁴ 'Exaltamento, grandeça, et honore': Giovanni da Vignano, *Flore de parlare*, ed. by Vincenti, p. 237.

³⁵ 'Honore, grandeça e unità e reposo': Giovanni da Vignano, *Flore de parlare*, ed. by Vincenti, p. 251.

³⁶ 'Ius suum cuilibet reddatur, et regatur civitas in iustitia et equitate': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, p. 220.

³⁷ 'Per haec enim frena [iustitia et equalitas] civitates reguntur [...] crescunt, ditantur et maximum recipiunt incrementum': John of Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. by Salvemini, p. 231.

tive: the greatness of the cities is reached through civil concord which enriches its citizens and avoids tyranny because 'when tyranny gains the upper hand, justice decays and love fails'.³⁸ The proper administration of justice generates peace thanks to concord and to the equal distribution of resources, for which

justice is that virtue which protects the society of men and common life, because, with all men living together, and with one person possessing fertile land or other property he needs, another person could, for this same reason, be moved by envy and discord, if justice were to not exist.³⁹

Brunetto Latini asserts that growth can be achieved only by promoting civil concord, a virtue with which the people of the same community are united together by the same laws. Recalling Sallust, the Guelph notary writes that 'with concord the little things grow and with discord are destroyed the great ones'.⁴⁰ The exhortation to love justice and to consider it the founding element of the civil greatness of a society becomes a question of enormous practical importance. The political system to pursue, whether republican or seignorial, is that in which the magistrates obey the precepts of justice and in which their conduct produces beneficial results for the community. The centrality of a state is measured by the importance it assigns to the administration of justice; thus, Brunetto affirms, good politics always has at its core the figure of the judge, 'because just as a ship is governed by the rudder, the city is guided by the wisdom of the judge'.⁴¹ And the figure of the judge, along with his duties, is at the centre of the Florentine statute of 1325 as guarantor and custodian of the city, of its territory, and of its district in the best way possible.⁴² Among contempo-

³⁸ 'Quant tyranie sormonte, la justise est perdue et l'amor faut': Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk II, para. 44, p. 414.

³⁹ 'Justise est cele vertu qui garde humane compaignie et communeté de vie. Car en ce que les homes habitent ensemble, et l'un a tere gaaignable ou autres possessions de quoi il a beseing, un autre por ce en fust comeus par envie et par discorde, se justise ne fust': Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk II, para. 91, p. 542.

⁴⁰ 'Concordie croissent les perites choses et par discorde se destruiuent les grandismes': Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk II, para. 108, p. 584.

⁴¹ 'Come la nef est governee par les timons, tout autresi est la citez menee par le savoir dou juge': Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami and others, bk III, para. 79, p. 808.

⁴² 'Et iuret Potestas ad sancta dei evangelia bona fide sine fraude regere, salvare et custodire toto tempore sui regiminis Florentie civitatem et burgos et suburgos et eius comitatum et districtum, et homines et personas civitatis et districtus eiusdem et eorum bona, et res et iura rationes Communis Florentie manutenere et conservare quam melius scivit et poterit [...]': *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Caggese and others, II: *Statuto del Podestà dell'anno 1325*, bk I, chap. 1, pp. 7–8.

raries, both the chorus of approval concerning the superiority of governments, based on deliberative councils and presided over by elected magistrates, as well as the concept according to which good political guidance of the community is achieved through self-government, become increasingly popular. Albertino Mussato, a tireless supporter of the freedoms of the commune of Padua against the abuses and demands of the great noble families, utilized Sallust to describe the history of the decline of Padua's freedom at the hands of the excessive power exercised over the city by Cangrande Della Scala, the *signore* of Verona.⁴³

Good Government

In every historical period, the interpretation of visual messages depends upon the reconstruction of the historical coordinates that lead to their production. In order to not run the risk of erroneous interpretations, or even the paradox of over-interpretation, it is necessary to be aware that for every image there exist multiple levels of meaning. The exegesis of the overall sense of the images must be founded on the inspection of all possible factors that may have influenced the lexical choices of the artist. In this way, the semantic origin of the visual message can be traced, and the system of signs within which communication is activated can be specified. It is a matter of arriving at the full cognition of the cultural cosmos within which patron and artist operate, and a matter of knowing the matrix of the language used in enunciating and giving life to an iconographic discourse. Art, which is inserted into the physical and cultural space of a society, thus becomes one of the components that, next to the economy, to the institutions, and to the religious practices, allows for an investigation of that society, because it is produced within a determined political space and within the system that governs it.⁴⁴

The civic images are a lexicon capable of satisfying the many needs of the political life of government, because 'civic' means at the same time pertinent to

⁴³ Albertino Mussato was also a playwright: in 1313 he wrote a tragedy inspired by Seneca, entitled *Ecerinis* (or *Ecerinide*), about the Veronese tyrant Ezzelino da Romano and about his actions against Padua during the period from 1236 to 1259, in order to warn his fellow Paduan citizens about Cangrande della Scala (the work is staged in Padua in 1315): Gualdo Rosa, 'Pré humanisme et humanisme en Italie'.

⁴⁴ On this subject, see Schmitt, 'Images and Historian'; Rosenberg, *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy*; Starn and Partridge, *Three Halls of State in Italy*; Euchner, Rigotti, and Schiera, *Il potere delle immagini*; Schiera, 'Politica moderna e comunicazione'; Fantoni, 'Il potere delle immagini'; Brown, *Language and Images in Renaissance Italy*; Ellenius, *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation*.

the city, to the citizenry, to the citizens as inhabitants of a city, and also pertinent to the citizen as a member of a political community, with particular reference to the values of civic life. The images are, therefore, narrative forms which tend towards *mimesis*, windows that open onto the world, and keys for an understanding of the society that produced them. The example of gothic cathedrals is emblematic in the area of the didactic representation of a society, that of the Low Middle Ages in the West, univocally Christian. On the façades of all European churches, the depictions of Christ multiply, the number of sacred images on the apses increases, coeval thought and culture are displayed on the sculpted walls and pulpits. Gregory the Great (590–604) summarizes this concept with precision when he explains that Sereno, the bishop of Marseille, had paintings removed from the churches of his diocese for fear of idolatry, underlining that only images are effective forms of communication, open and understandable books for all those who do not know how to read.⁴⁵ The victory of vision as a main vehicle of communication is sanctioned by St Augustine (354–430), who reveals in his *Confessions* how much importance images have for his contemporaries when he writes that ‘the eyes among the senses [are] the principal instrument of knowledge’.⁴⁶

In the course of the late Middle Ages, the contribution of the Swabians in the person of Frederick II was crucial for civic art. The art of Frederick’s reign outlined the main lines of Italian communal and Renaissance art, marking a drastic widening of the repertoire in a secular sense and a renewed attitude toward transmitting complex political messages in monumental form, thanks also to the integration of eloquent inscriptions and decisive premises for the communicative efficiency of political art.⁴⁷ In the sphere of the institutional evolutions of the communal city of central and northern Italy, it is clearly visible that in correlation with the rise of the governments of the *popolo*, and thus beginning with the second half of the thirteenth century, images left the

⁴⁵ ‘Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa etiam ignorantes vident quid sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt [...]. Ac deinde subjungendum quia picturas imaginum, quae ad aedificationem imperiti populi fuerant factae, ut nescientes litteras, ipsam historiam intendentes, quid actum sit discerent [...] ut ex visione rei gestae ardorem compunctionis percipiant, et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctae Trinitatis humiliter prosternantur’: Gregory I, *Epistulae*, Epistola XIII, cols 1128BC, 1129AB.

⁴⁶ ‘Gli occhi fra i sensi [are] lo strumento principale della conoscenza’: Augustine, *Le Confessioni*, ed. by Carena, bk I, chap. 5, paras 35–54, p. 393. On the European dimension of this phenomenon, see Alpers, *Arte del descrivere, scienza e pittura nel Seicento olandese*.

⁴⁷ Brown, ‘Introduction’.

churches and entered into public and noble palaces, thereby becoming one of the most utilized means of transmitting political ideas and promoting new ruling classes. From the second half of the *Duecento* on, many Italian communes commissioned more or less famous artists for the visual representation of the good political actions carried out by their leaders. These commissions were true public investments aimed at celebrating good government and its success in terms of the political harmony of the communities financing the artwork, investments having the objective of consecrating the symbols unanimously recognized by the citizenry and of underlining those common values with which every member of the community must identify, with the goal of legitimizing the persecution of political opponents. Artists and intellectuals were called to Italian cities to contribute to the propagation of republican or seignorial political models, to celebrate the oligarchies that guided them, to stigmatize crimes, to consecrate symbols, and, in the end, to impose values with which the community was to compare itself in order to identify with them.⁴⁸

The impact these forms of self-legitimization have over time can be synthesized in the ideas of Bartolomeo Fazio (1400–57), who explains how in the period of his production, it was the citizens themselves who assign great importance to the images. Naturally, the images are better understood if they have *tituli*, inscriptions that are sometimes found accompanying the images with the purpose of explaining implied metaphors and analogies to the public. For Bartolomeo Fazio, the images and words delivered the best and most effective of all possible political messages, and for Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72) they strongly legitimized the political authorities because the images, he writes in his *De Pictura*, aroused movement, engagement, emotion, and sentiment in the observer.⁴⁹ Referring to the achievement of political consensus by a man of

⁴⁸ The images have a strong impact on society if we consider the example of the statutes of Barbona of 1260, according to which, in the name of poverty in contrast to luxury, are given a series of regulations intended to greatly limit its role: ‘Cum autem curiositas et superfluitas directe obvient paupertati, ordinamus quod aedificiorum curiositas in picturis, fenestris, columnis et huiusmodi aut superfluitas in longitudine, latitudine et altitudine, secundum loci conditionem, arctius evitetur’: rub. III, para. 5, in Frugoni, *Francesco e l’invenzione delle stimate*, p. 49 n. 161). ‘Item fenestrae vitreae historiatae vel picturatae de cetero nusquam fiant, excepto quod in principali vitrea post maius altare chori, haberi possint imagines Crucifixi, B. Virginis, B. Iohannis, B. Francisci et B. Antonimi tantum. Et si de cetero factae fuerint, per visitatores amoveantur’: rub. III, para. 18, in Frugoni, *Francesco e l’invenzione delle stimate*, p. 49 n. 161. See also *La propaganda politica nel basso Medioevo*.

⁴⁹ Among the countless possible examples on this material, I refer the reader to Donato, ‘Testi, contesti, immagini politiche nel tardo Medioevo’, and to Donato, ‘*Cose morali, e anche appartenenti secondo e’ luoghi*’. On the same theme but on its specific instances, see instead

power, Machiavelli affirms that patronage is nothing other than one of the most effective political actions for which 'a prince must also show himself to be a lover of virtue by giving a home to virtuous men and honouring the masters of art'.⁵⁰

Such conceptions were derived from the classical tradition thanks to authors such as Quintilian, who sustains that images, above all, when they are accompanied by words, have the power to reach the mind of the people, thereby facilitating the creation of stronger forms of political consensus. The Middle Ages codified these concepts and transmitted them to the Renaissance, which transformed the images into truly central forms for representing authority. The halls of public buildings became places where civic paintings were housed, and thus where the authorities legitimized themselves and demonized the opponents of the current system. They became places in which the images were instruments of political struggle with which the recognizable symbols of the community were consecrated (eagles, lions, and other similar beasts, but also patron saints), supranational authorities were honoured, and the good and peaceful state of the city was communicated. 'When a [Ghibelline] eagle is painted on top of a [Guelph] lion,' writes San Bernardino about the *Piazza del Campo* of Siena, 'uh! immediately he who is of the opposite political persuasion has a lion on top of an eagle painted for revenge.'⁵¹ And so it goes.

The complexity of the Italian political situation in the communal period witnessed a continuous involvement on the part of artists and intellectuals in an attempt to ward off the affirmation of a bad government over a good one. In many cities, an articulated system of political communication was brought to perfection, regulated by the public commercial economy (that is, directed toward the community), both official (as the expression of the institutions of the authorities in power) and lay (as it is distinct and autonomous with respect to the labour system in the religious and ecclesiastical sphere). The communal cities of central and northern Italy, animated by endemic controversies and continuous contradictions, became the place of birth and dissemination of a philosophical literature oriented towards the virtual search for the ideal

Rubinstein, 'Le allegorie di Ambrogio Lorenzetti nella Sala della Pace'; Skinner, 'Il Buon Governo di Ambrogio Lorenzetti'; Donato, 'Ancora sulle "fonti" nel Buon Governo di Ambrogio Lorenzetti'.

⁵⁰ 'Debbe ancora uno principe mostrarsi amatore delle virtù dando recapito alli uomini virtuosi, e onorare gli eccellenti in una arte': Machiavelli, 'Il Principe', ed. by Martelli, chap. XXI, p. 292.

⁵¹ 'Quando si dipinge un'aquila [ghibellina] adosso a uno liono [guelfo] [...] uh! subito colui che tiene la parte a contrario, fa dipignare per vendetta uno liono adosso a una aquila': citation in Donato, *Dante e le arti visive*, pp. 9–47 (pp. 13–14).

society. Preachers, summoned to spread among the citizenry the importance of behaviour from the pulpit, and humanists, engaged by civic governments as men of politics, inspired to appropriate civil conduct, placate violence, and contribute to the social peace with their rhetorical abilities. The numerous texts of chroniclers and essayists written in the vernacular, the new language of the *popolo*, invited citizens to put aside their own personal interests in favour of those of the community, giving life to a propagandistic language that reflected the hopes and aspirations of the people, who in turn were in continuous struggle for political legitimization. In all of the Italian communal cities a language of persuasion was created that found its most effective expressive form in painting, a language that permits the emerging ruling classes to create political manifestos often with the intent of imposing and defending the image and the predominant role of the community over the individual.⁵²

The great rooms of the city's public buildings, in which the civic councils met, were decorated with images that attested to the need of professionalizing the new groups of authority in a propagandistic vein. The fresco in Massa Marittima, inside the public fountain erected by the Ghibelline *podestà* Ildebrando da Pisa in the 1260s, can be considered at the same time one of the first representations of witches and a manifesto of political propaganda commissioned to an anonymous painter from the Guelph party in power. With the realization of this fresco the Guelph regime wished to portray Massa as a city overwhelmed by political contentions, pervaded by heresy, and stained by the sexual deviations that the pro-imperial Ghibelline regime promoted and endorsed in the years of its political mandate. The bond with the anti-Ghibelline propaganda and the possibility that the representation had political undertones derived from the presence in the fresco of eagles — the eagle in medieval heraldry is the symbol of the Empire — which fly over several women. Reinforcing this theory is the fact that the women are depicted in the act of picking phalli from a tree, thus confirming the intent of the painter to underline the decadence of a politically amoral society.⁵³

The frescoes executed in the *Palazzo del Broletto* between 1270 and 1272 by the Guelph commune of the *popolo* of Brescia in celebration of their own political victory over the Ghibellines can be inserted into this same discussion.

⁵² Zorzi, 'L'angoscia delle repubbliche'.

⁵³ Ferzoco, *The Massa Marittima Mural*. Ferzoco affirms that the women present in the fresco are picking and then placing the masculine sexual organs in baskets, according to a typical action of witches: cf. Kramer and Sprenger, *Il martello delle streghe*, ed. by Endrici. On this, see Lansing, *Passion and Order*, pp. 181–83.

Begun in 1223 and completed halfway through the century, the *Palazzo del Broletto* is the place in which the Inner Council (*Consiglio di Credenza*) meets and in which are affixed illustrative images with the goal of politically educating the visiting guests. The game of political superiority is organized on two different levels: there is, in fact, a noticeable difference between the figures of the upper band and those of the lower band. The first group, painted in the upper band, represents the Guelph winners who ride on their chargers with pride and dignity, with their heads slightly reclined and one hand resting on their cheek or on their hat. The second group, painted in the lower band, have instead a more disorganized appearance: there is one figure who is drinking excessively; one with dishevelled hair, who wields a large ax while pronouncing unseemly things; and one who holds a cat seated on one forearm and a mouse on the other, all figures unworthy of being *cives*. The world of the *milites* is here associated with the new Guelph ruling classes, while the Ghibellines are associated with the world of the *comites*, the squires, who like the *milites* are on horseback with unrefined, excessive, and improper behaviour. The Ghibellines are depicted with short swords while they carry axes, forced to hold shields with the coat-of-arms of their own noble lineage in a sign of dishonour. The Ghibelline defeat and the destruction of their political memory is exemplified by their representation as rebels and thus as enemies who tried to overturn the Guelph authority of Charles I of Anjou in Brescia. As occurs in many other examples of political painting recounted by textual sources but unfortunately no longer extant, onto this fresco another would be superimposed at a later time, *The Peace of Berardo Maggi* (*La pace di Berardo Maggi*), a large scene of public life in which the peacemaker-bishop and *signore* of the city from 1282 to 1308 is portrayed in the act of negotiating peace between the two opposing factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines.⁵⁴

The need to underline the common good through the image of good government is also confirmed in other cities during the age of Dante. In Siena in 1250 some paintings were ordered for the church of San Pellegrino, a meeting place for communal bodies, the subjects of which were unfortunately ignored but which presumably were made to institutionally celebrate the commune and its political organisms.⁵⁵ In Florence, there was news of frescoes in the Bargello, presumably painted by Giotto and which were later lost, that were made to

⁵⁴ Andenna, 'Pittura infamante e propaganda politica negli affreschi del Broletto'; and Milani, 'Prima del Buongoverno'.

⁵⁵ *Il Costituto del comune di Siena dell'anno 1262*, ed. by Zdekauer, p. lxx, n. 6; Cammarosano, 'Siena dalla solidarietà imperiale al guelfismo', p. 462.

represent the triumph of the Guelph party over the Ghibellines following the battle of Campaldino in 1289.⁵⁶ There are reports of these painting in the *Lives* by Giorgio Vasari, where it is written that Giotto

in the Great Hall of the *podestà* of Florence [he] painted the Commune (an idea stolen by many), representing it as sitting in the form of Judge, sceptre in hand, and over its head he placed the balanced scales as symbol of the just decisions administered by it, accompanying it with four Virtues, that are, Strength with courage, Wisdom with the laws, Justice with arms, and Temperance with words; this work is beautiful as a picture, and characteristic and appropriate in invention.⁵⁷

In the 1290s the commune of San Gimignano commissioned for the Hall of Dante in the *Palazzo del Popolo* several hunting scenes accompanied by depictions of equestrian clashes as examples of exercises that the citizens should practise in order to guarantee civic freedoms. Such scenes bear witness to the medieval idea of the hunt as the training ground of virtue aimed at preserving the good and peaceful state of the city and at safeguarding liberty and prosperity for the city itself.⁵⁸

This type of art is often temporary because the impulse that favours its production disappears with the alternation of governments. These images are demagogical representations, expressions of the dominant party and thus subject to being destroyed in the moment of change from one regime to another, or in the moment in which the building that houses them undergoes renovation or destruction. An excellent example of this type of art is still extant in Siena. It is an ideological manifesto, a true manifesto of political propaganda, a paradigmatic model of communal society painted between 1338 and 1339 by Ambrogio Lorenzetti for the Hall of Peace in *Palazzo Pubblico*. The fresco represents an iconographic program in which the commune, personified by the large, elderly man with a crown and a globe, is portrayed in the act of reassuring the entire citizenry of the beneficial effects of its own regency. The main intent is that of discouraging all those who would want to overturn the direct sovereignty of the government of the *popolo*. The fresco offers to the viewer a

⁵⁶ Morpurgo, *Un affresco perduto di Giotto nel Palazzo del Podestà di Firenze*.

⁵⁷ 'Nella sala grande del *Podestà* di Fiorenza, per mettere paura ai popoli dipinse il comune ch'è rubato da molti; dove in forma di giudice con lo scettro in mano a sedere lo figura, e le bilance pari sopra la testa, per le giuste ragioni ministrate da esso, et aiutato da quattro figure, dalla Fortezza con l'animo, dalla Prudenzia con le leggi, dalla Giustizia con l'armi e dalla Temperanza con le parole; pittura bella et invenzione garbata, propria e verisimile': Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, ed. by Bellosi and Rossi, p. 127.

⁵⁸ Wieruszowski, 'Art and the Commune'.

typically pre-humanistic analysis of virtuous government promoting the attainment of the glory and greatness for the city and its territory through civic virtue. At the centre of the work is the glorification of the mercantile classes as promoters of justice, concord, peace, civil allegiance, and common good in a period influenced by anguish due to the threat of the rise to power by despotic governments. The painting reflects the strategies of a ruling class that is very politically aware, as the notary Cecco di Tura confirmed when he was called to preside over the commission for the writing of a *liber iurium*, compiled between 1335 and 1336. The notary was, in fact, invited to write objectively so as to not overly emphasize the primary institutional role related to the consular phase of the commune, to not give too much space to the moment in which the commune passed from being guided by a *podestà*, and to not to be too partial when describing the government of the *popolo* under the guidance of the Nine.⁵⁹ The *Good Government* painting by Lorenzetti legitimized itself conceptually by putting itself into contrast with the model of despotic governments, which were bearers of injustice, divisions, wars, and egotism because they were run by magnates. Lorenzetti reproduces Siena in the work as perfectly developed with its network of roads, squares, alleys, balconies, loggias, churches and towers, as a place in which the legitimate work activity of the citizens proceeds according to the laws of concord. The scenes of life inside and outside the city walls take place with dignity and good measure — presumably untouched by the actual reality of Siena, here, too, torn by intrigues and factional conflict — inspiring virtual joy and social tranquillity.⁶⁰

The overall iconographic program in the Hall of Peace in Siena summarizes the celebration of the popular regime understood as an alternative to tyranny, which is represented as a real, physical threat for the Siennese commune given the position assigned to its image, the first thing the visitor sees when entering into the hall of the Nine. As Marc Bloch writes, the *Good Government* is not a realistic painting because in the course of the Middle Ages the artist never concerned himself with producing a faithful reproduction of reality. In this case, as well, the work is a simple form of political communication, and, above all, a direct expression of a new political direction devoid of tradition.⁶¹ It was very well known among contemporaries judging by the precision with which chroniclers describe it, as demonstrated by an anonymous Siennese writer who describes its position in the *Palazzo Pubblico*, noticing that ‘these paintings are

⁵⁹ Cammarosano, *Tradizione documentaria e storia cittadina*, pp. 26–27 and 74–75.

⁶⁰ Rubinstein, ‘Political Ideas in Siennese Art’.

⁶¹ Bloch, ‘Le “invenzioni” medievali’, p. 205.

in the aforementioned town hall, up the stairs from the first door on the left: and whoever goes there can see them'.⁶² The relationship between governors and governed is reinforced through the images of peace and unity, certainly known to many judging by the numerous references made to them by coeval preachers in their sermons.⁶³

The concepts of justice and common good glorified by governments of the *popolo* belonged to both the world of politics and the universe of preaching, as previously noted. With the goal of achieving consensus among the citizenry, the mercantile classes produced slogans alluding to the Christian virtues of justice, peace, concord, common good, and *equitas*. The hope for peace and social serenity was strengthened through religious iconography. The Holy Face of Lucca (*Volto Santo*), the Girdle of Thomas of Prato (*Sacra Cintola*), and the Holy Thorn of Pisa (*Santa Spina*) are emblematic cases; it was through these prodigious objects that a 'legend of origin' was elaborated, which was a fundamental element in advancing institutional continuity, a spirit of identity, and social peace through the care of the sanctuary by the community.⁶⁴ The religious image, as demonstrated by the cult of Saint Ambrose of Milan, took on a primary role in terms of the creation of community, becoming fundamental and indispensable. Thus, in the world of the late Middle Ages the image of the Virgin Mary in majesty, the merciful and salvific Mother, was elevated to the role of protectress of the entire community, guaranteeing a good and peaceful state of affairs. Mary became the merciful Mother who intercedes for suffering souls, as demonstrated by the veneration of the Virgin of Impruneta, the town near Florence where between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the sacred image acquired powers so great that it was carried in processions even by the Florentines. Beyond the indisputable salvific powers, it was held to be capable of bringing rain in times of drought, of stopping rain when it was too abundant, helping those who asked for advice, and resolving political problems, such as those which had been destabilizing the republic of Florence from its inception.⁶⁵

⁶² 'Queste dipinture sono in nel detto palazzo del Comune, salito le schale al primo uscio a mano sinistra: e chi vi va el può vedere': *Cronaca senese*, ed. by Lisini and Iacometti, p. 78.

⁶³ Shaw, 'Memory and Tradition in Sieneese Political Life', p. 223. On preachers and the themes of peace and unity, see Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 77–87; and Muzzarelli, *Pescatori di uomini*.

⁶⁴ Benvenuti, "'Santuario': un percorso semantico", pp. 35–42.

⁶⁵ Trexler, 'Florentine Religious Experience'. The miraculous powers of the Madonna of Impruneta were transmitted by the anonymous continuer of the *Diary* of Luca Landucci, who writes that in November of 1538 'the Virgin Mary of Impruneta was carried to Florence because

The sacred icon became, then, an instrument of political propaganda aimed at the creation of a common identity rendered possible by the capacity of intercession attributed to it. Mary entered into the processions, and her cult and veneration became increasingly popular. She could intervene into the collective consciousness of the city because her cult had the strength of legitimizing the sphere of the administration at the moment in which the government itself approved of her veneration and of the propagation of her cult. Mary acquired an essentially political connotation, and her icon was symbolically utilized for reinforcing the ideologies of the state in search of stability; she protected the civic magistracies that publicized her cult in the various districts, the bonding force of all social classes of the city, both of magnates and of the people. She appeared, eventually, in public buildings and found a place in the civic statutes.⁶⁶

In the course of the *Duecento*, the icon of the Madonna becomes a true, popular Guelph cult image. In his *Cronica*, the Franciscan Salimbene de Adam (1221–88) recounts the siege of the city of Parma by the Ghibellines in February, 1248, writing that ‘the women of Parma all went to pray to the Blessed Virgin so that she would completely free their city from Frederick and from their other enemies, because they held her name as head of the Mother Church in great reverence’.⁶⁷ Diana Webb underlines how from the second half of the thirteenth century on

the cult of Virgin was authentically popular, but also satisfied the need of the ruling elites that was at once old and new, affective and authoritative. It cannot have escaped the notice of the Florentine authorities that neighbours and past or present enemies such as Pisa and Siena had long venerated the Virgin as their supreme patron.⁶⁸

it had rained for a long time. And once this was done it immediately stopped raining and the sun came out, which was an admirable thing’ (la Vergine Maria de la ‘Npruneta fu portata a Firenze perché era piovuto lungo tenpo. E subito fatto el partito cesò la piova e fessi bello tenpo, che fu cosa miranda): Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, ed. by Lanza, p. 375. On the cult of the Madonna of Impruneta related mostly to moments of danger or natural disaster, see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 63–73. On the miraculous powers attributed to the Madonna up to the Medici Grand Duchy, see Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, pp. 171–200.

⁶⁶ Le Goff, *La nascita del Purgatorio*.

⁶⁷ ‘Le donne di Parma andarono tutte a pregare la beata Vergine che liberasse del tutto la loro città da Federico e dagli altri nemici, a motivo che i Parmigiani tenevano in grande riverenza il nome di lei, come titolare della chiesa matrice’: Salimbene de Adam, *Chronica*, ed. by Scalia, I, rub. 812.

⁶⁸ Webb, *Patrons and Defenders*, p. 181. On the significance of the Virgin of Siena, see Heal, ‘“Civitas Virginis”?’.

In the middle years of the *Duecento* in Florence, the Dominicans of *Santa Maria Novella* encouraged the birth of lay associations aimed at sustaining the violent anti-Ghibelline campaign that the inquisitors were conducting in support of pontifical policy. In the same city the Franciscan project, which was realized in the construction of the church of *Santa Croce*, found in the work of Giotto the capacity to spread the new values of the emerging mercantile ruling class with anti-Ghibelline undertones. The case of Florence demonstrates how the governments of the *popolo* intentionally utilized the mendicant orders who constructed their identity around the cult of Mary and how their insertion in the cultural and political context of the communal cities strengthened the Guelph cause through the Marian cult, which increasingly strove to unite itself with the mercantile components while distancing itself from the Ghibelline cause, thereby providing the right social and political connotation for the new ruling classes in search of political legitimacy.⁶⁹

Beginning with the end of 1260s, the Marian cult, by then widespread in the entire Italian peninsula, became an instrument of anti-Ghibelline propaganda and one of the indispensable mainstays of Guelph identity. The Ghibelline defeat of 1266 forever fused the Marian devotion with Guelphism, thereby reinforcing it with its anti-heretical tones and associating the fight against Ghibellinism with the fight against heresy.⁷⁰ The case of Siena is emblematic in terms of how the government of the Nine embedded its own legitimacy in the collective civic mentality by owning the Siennese devotion for the Virgin Mary. Marian devotion, already present in the city after having acquired political value following the victory of the Siennese over the Florentines at Montaperti

⁶⁹ Benvenuti, 'L'impianto mendicante in Firenze'. The Franciscans build a good part of their success on the female public based on the life of Umiliana dei Cerchi (1219-1246). One of the figures of great importance in the first generation of Franciscans of *Santa Croce* was shown to be the hagiographer Vito da Cortona who, together with Friar Michele degli Alberti in writing about the saint, conducted an anti-Ghibelline campaign of propaganda in the name of the order by listing the miracles accomplished by Umiliana in her lifetime and in the three-year period after her death, making numerous allusions which caused the figure of a Ghibelline Satan and *fautor ereticorum* to emerge. On this subject, Anna Benvenuti writes that 'The hagiography of Umiliana is extremely important for connecting the political outcomes of the faction and of the Cerchi family with their progressively stronger relationship with the Franciscan Order': Benvenuti, 'L'impianto mendicante in Firenze', p. 606 n. 28. On the figure of the saint, see Franco, *La beata Umiliana de' Cerchi francescana*; Benvenuti, 'Umiliana dei Cerchi'; Schuchman, 'The Lives of Umiliana de' Cerchi'.

⁷⁰ Manselli, *L'eresia del male*, pp. 276-95, and Benvenuti, *Pastori di popolo*, pp. 79-81. See also Maire Vigueur, 'Religione e politica nella propaganda pontificia', p. 69.

on 4 September 1260, politically tied the city to the Marian cult — it was the Virgin Mary who helped them defeat the Florentines — and would permit the government of the Nine to appropriate this devotion when it ascended to power in 1287.⁷¹

The government of the Nine manufactured its political consensus by following this tradition. The political tensions and the threats of seignorial affirmation suggest the strengthening of political power through the focused use of sacred images, which were definitively codified with the measures of 1309 and 1310. These measures establish that 15 August would become the most important religious and civic holiday of the city. The images of the Virgin were thus placed on the gates which opened the city onto its territory, underlining the protection that the dominant city exercised over the bordering areas. Well-known was the depiction by Simone Martini on the *Porta Camollia*, where the image of the *Assumption of the Virgin* (*Assunzione della Vergine*), projected onto the city walls and towards the external territory, had the power to transform Siena into the Jerusalem of Mary.⁷² On the occasion of the conclusion of the *Maestà* by Duccio di Buoninsegna in 1311 (the work was begun in 1308), the Nine organized a procession in which important Sienese citizens participated, along with a great feast lasting three days, at the end of which the masterpiece was placed in the civic cathedral. The political message of the *Maestà* was based on the fact that the entire community, through Duccio's work, placed itself in the hands of Mary, thereby rendering itself sacred.⁷³

Even if the commune continued to be overwhelmed by factional struggles and devastated by bloodshed in the streets, the good government that promoted the common good becomes an ideological projection of reality. In contrast to this conflictual reality, the necessity to foster civic concord developed, which could be guaranteed only through the shared application of justice. The judicial system was invested with the right to ostracize, exclude, kill, and, above all, guarantee peaceful and serene civic coexistence. It became the supreme manifestation of divine sovereignty, and the biblical maxim, presumably written by Solomon and taken from the Old Testament (Love justice, you who judge the

⁷¹ Nevola, 'Civic Identity and Private Patrons', p. 18.

⁷² On the value of symbols placed on city gates (in Siena the impact of the she-wolf's image was certainly not inferior to that of the Virgin), see Gardner, 'An Introduction to the Iconography of the Medieval City Gate'.

⁷³ L'Mater S(an)c(t)a Dei sis causa Senis requiei [...] sis Ducio vita te quia pinxit ita': Donato, 'Le opere e i nomi', p. 10.

earth),⁷⁴ was propagated from Siena to all of communal society, placing itself at the centre of the language of political propaganda, a language that would catch the attention of even Dante, who quotes the same concept in his *Comedy*.⁷⁵

Justice must be administered virtuously, and it must develop an emotional language capable of suppressing factional struggles and of rewarding the good, of containing violence, and of punishing the wicked. The case of the Nine in Siena is yet again emblematic. Here the mercantile government created a line of connection between the two most important places of the city, the Cathedral and *Palazzo Pubblico*, the greatest monuments that chronologically proceeded concurrently in their construction and where the religious and civic cults are forever united. The commissioning of the *Maestà* for the Hall of the Council (or of the World Map) of *Palazzo Pubblico* to Simone Martini was the crowning of this union. Between 1315 and 1321, the years of the realization of this new political icon, the image of Mary became *sedes Sapientiae* and defender of the weak, while the inscriptions underline the admonitory character of the work placed where the government deliberates. The date of the beginning of work on the fresco, 1315, was the year in which Guelph Tuscany was marked by the defeat of Montecatini, when Siena passed to Philip of Anjou, prince of Taranto and vicar of King Robert. This move confirmed the commitment of the Nine to align itself with the Guelph Republic of Florence, where the Tolomei and Salimbeni noble families began to make their presence heard in the city. In this image, in which the Siennese citizens are depicted on their knees before the Virgin in an act of veneration, the inscriptions condemn all those who betray the good civic state and argue against the 'powerful' (*potenti*) who bother the 'weak' (*debili*) in following the recurring themes of the regimes of the *popolo*.⁷⁶

On the heels of Simone Martini's *Maestà* for the town hall of Siena, in 1317 Lippo Memmi (c. 1285–c. 1361) painted an image of the Virgin in the council room of the town hall in San Gimignano, but with a substantial difference: here the painter does not depict the city next to the civic magistracies, as in Siena, but only next to its *podestà*, who in this case is the Siennese Nello dei Tolomei. In this way, and in this scenic space, the *podestà* rises to the role of the only representative of the entire community of San Gimignano before the Virgin, to

⁷⁴ 'Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram': La Sacra Bibbia, ed. by The Italian Catholic Publishers, UECI (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1974), Sapienza, I, 1, p. 643.

⁷⁵ Dante, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Chiappelli, *Paradiso*, XVIII. 91–92.

⁷⁶ That is, 'per proprio stato disprezza me e la mia terra inganna': Bowsky, *Un comune italiano nel Medioevo*, p. 76. On the cult of the Virgin in Siena, see Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*.

whom he is presented by Saint Nicholas holding a scroll.⁷⁷ The *podestà* of San Gimignano is portrayed in this fresco on his knees in front of the Virgin in an attitude of devotion and clearly distinct from the other twenty-seven figures present in the scene. With respect to the *Maestà* by Simone Martini, the one by Lippo Memmi gives the most important iconographic significance to the representative of the city, and not to the city itself. And even if the *podestà* is presented to the Virgin as a devoted follower and not as a politician, the connotation of the personal celebration is too strong to be obscured and is too clear to be misunderstood.⁷⁸

The attitude of devotion towards the religious image that represents the community collectively can be seen even in the position of Enrico Scrovegni in one of the frescoes that Giotto painted in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. Enrico is portrayed by Giotto on the back wall of the chapel in the act of symbolically returning to the Virgin what his father extorted from other men. His attire is purple, the colour of penitence, and he is kneeling before Mary in the act of giving her the small church. Enrico Scrovegni is concerned with repairing his family's legacy: a very wealthy *parvenu*, he does not neglect the importance of his public image in order to obtain political consensus. With the gesture described above, he attempts to redeem himself of his earthly faults and to credit himself as a good Christian no longer at risk of eternal damnation.⁷⁹ Another clear attitude of devotion, this time with more clearly political ends, is that of Robert of Anjou (1278–1343), who utilized the mastery of Simone Martini to transmit the image of himself as an attentive and wise sovereign and as a virtuous and chivalric ruler. In 1317, immediately after his canonization, Robert commissioned the Sienese artist to paint the wooden panel *Saint Louis of Toulouse Crowning Robert of Anjou* (*San Ludovico di Tolosa incorona Roberto d'Angiò*). In commissioning this work, Anjou had himself depicted kneeling at the feet of Louis who, dressed in his episcopal habit, is in the act of crowning the king with a strong allusion to the events of 1296, when Louis renounced the crown of Sicily in favour of his brother. Condensed in this visual consecration is a very clear proclamation, one that defines the transmission of the sanctity of regal power by way of the crowning ceremony.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ 'Salve regina mundi, mater Dei [...] vobis commendo devotum infrascriptum [...] ut placeat vobis suscipere istum et inter sanctos viros esse mistum angelos patriarchas vivi Dei': Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, p. 100.

⁷⁸ Campbell, *The Game of Courting and the Art of the Commune of San Gimignano*.

⁷⁹ Frugoni, *L'affare migliore di Enrico*.

⁸⁰ Wieruszowski, 'Art and Commune'; Hoch, 'The Franciscan Provenance'; Vagnoni, 'Una

The Iconology of Justice

From the end of the *Duecento* onward, in many cities of central and northern Italy a repertoire of political images began to be promoted based on a rather simple iconographical lexicon. At the centre of this repertoire was the representation of justice. The dramatically increasing numbers of iconographical portrayals of this virtuous order of human relationships were realized in order to guarantee social peace and to promote political stability. These images were painted not only to obtain consensus, to promote social cohesion, or to celebrate or seal diplomatic success, but they were painted in order to depict traitors, the bankrupt, and falsifiers who failed to appear before the legal system, and therefore to ignominiously stigmatize these threats to the current order along with all other antisocial behaviour. The identification with the commune in the figure of the judge emerged from the first celebrative representations of individual *podestàs*. The divine judge, always accompanied by the symbols of justice — such as scales, a book and the sword — often appears in the images of the crucifix and Final Judgment, religious elements associated with the necessity of the impartiality of justice in the collective consciousness. Concord and the common good are the primary benefits of society, and the image of justice became their guarantor: a blindfolded woman wielding a sword and holding scales, the sword for punishing the wicked, the scales for arbitrating fairly.

The problem for every earthly power revolves around the recognition of the legitimacy of punishment. Thus, earthly sentences can be considered legitimate only if they are pronounced and carried out by a judge who has legitimate jurisdiction and whose power is recognized as having emanated directly from God. God conceded to the Romans the Universal Empire over the world, and communal society assigned the power to punish to those who were considered to be representatives of God. And who was elected by God was provided with the vicarial function of guiding the *popolo* through the use of justice. As Isidore of Seville writes, the king expresses his power in the name of God ('in kings [...] is praised above all compassion, given that justice is by its own nature severe'),⁸¹ and it is in this same way that the Italian communes imposed themselves first within, and then later without, the city walls.⁸²

nota sulla regalità sacra di Roberto d'Angiò'; Gagliardi, 'San Ludovico fra tradizione agiografica e diffusione del culto', pp. 83–84.

⁸¹ 'Regiae virtutes praecipuae duae: iustitia et pietas. Plus autem in regibus laudatur pietas, nam iustitia per se severa est': Isidore of Seville, *Etimologie o origini*, ed. by Valastro Canale, bk ix.III.5 (1, 736).

⁸² Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata*, pp. 72–80. The process of legitimization of the commune

Justice must be impartial. The idea of impartiality is central in the frescoes of the great superior hall of the *Palazzo del Podestà* of Mantua, constructed in 1227, in which scenes of the Final Judgment are painted.⁸³ In the *Sacred and Most Sacred Ordinances* (*Ordinamenta sacrata et sacratissima*) of Prato of 1292, the wolf and the lamb eat side by side and are threatened by a red sword suspended over their heads, which signifies that in Prato, justice strikes indiscriminately both the magnates and the common people, all those who do not live according to the parameters of civic concord.⁸⁴ The image of *Iustitia* inspiring civil concord was sanctified by Giotto in 1306, in the Scrovegni Chapel of Padua in contrast with *Iniustitia*. *Iustitia* is portrayed as a woman seated on a throne who reigns over the two plates of the scales: on one of which an angel crowns the just, and on the other an executioner decapitates the criminal; *Iniustitia* is depicted wearing the clothes of a judge with hands of a bird of prey at whose feet robberies, homicides, and violence are committed in a scene of woodland destruction. The figure of Justice is here crowned because she is the queen among the virtues as a dispenser of civic concord.⁸⁵ In this work Giotto synthesizes the experience accumulated in previous works, such as the frescoes for the *Palazzo del Podestà* of Florence cited above,⁸⁶ and those of the *Palazzo della Ragione* of Padua, lost in a fire in 1420.⁸⁷

The image of justice proposed by Giotto was absorbed by successive generations and adapted to the different political realities that dominated individual cities. Having been fully developed as an impersonal figure, the image of the commune in the form of judge introduced the allegory of the nature of

concluded on 19 February 1329, when the emperor Louis IV (the Bavarian), celebrating a mock trial against the Avignonese pope John XXII, represented by a puppet of made of wood and straw dressed in pontifical attire, highlighted through this kind of defamatory propaganda that the commune, in place of the Empire, had finally conquered its own political space: cf. Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata*, p. 97.

⁸³ Gazzola, *Il Palazzo del Podestà di Mantova*.

⁸⁴ Ravaggi, 'Appunti sulle forme di propaganda nel conflitto tra magnati e popolani', pp. 474–75. The ironclad Ordinances of Justice are ready to transversely intervene against its transgressors, as shown by the representation of this same subject in a fifteenth-century fresco attributed to Pietro di Miniato, in which *Giustizia militante* is represented in the Hall of the Council of the town hall of the city: Ravaggi, 'Protagonisti e antagonisti nel libero Comune', p. 678.

⁸⁵ Frugoni, *L'affare migliore di Enrico*, pp. 301–07; and Riess, 'Justice and Common Good in Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes'.

⁸⁶ Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, ed. by Bellosi and Rossi, p. 127.

⁸⁷ Frojmovic, 'Giotto's Allegories of Justice'.

its government, good or bad. After 1323, Agostino di Giovanni and Angelo di Ventura sculpted the bas-reliefs of the sepulchre of the *signore* and Bishop Guido Tarlati for the cathedral in Arezzo with the task of synthesizing Tarlati's political greatness as administrator of the city according to the rules of justice. For this reason he is immortalized in these portrayals while directly receiving the investiture for the administration of justice as the only representative of the city.⁸⁸ In Pisa, the religious theme of Final Judgment frescoed in 1336 by the Florentine painter Buonamico Buffalmacco in the graveyard describes the triumph of death and of justice through the message of a supreme power superior to all terrestrial hierarchies. These hierarchies, symbolized by the three decomposed bodies of rich lay persons and clergymen, recall the theme of the transience of worldly things as well as the universal idea of justice in an otherworldly prospective.⁸⁹

In the fresco of *Good Government* (*Buongoverno*) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in Siena, *Iustitia* becomes guarantor of civic concord and promoter of peace in the city and in the territory. She is commutative because she regulates the relationships between individuals and between society and its members, and she is punitive because she regulates the exercising of judiciary power. For the Nine, Justice has the power of bestowing to each his own (*suum cuique tribuere*) and therefore to facilitate social peace (*Pax*), the true centre of the rhetorical exercise through images produced by Lorenzetti. The *Pax* is represented as reclined and balancing perilously while holding her head up with the palm of her hand and leaning on her elbow. Only the long ropes intertwined by Concord and held by the hands of the twenty-four eminent citizens facilitate Peace, evidently in a precarious position. For Lorenzetti, justice, peace and thus the common good represent the important elements of communal political culture and are portrayed on a throne with several subdued and chained prisoners at their feet.

The *Good Government* is guarded by *Securitas*, who holds the image of a hanged man, a symbol of order and peace, with a scroll in his hand that reads:

Without fear may every man freely travel
and may each work to sow
as long as this commune
shall maintain this lady [*Securitas*, daughter of *Iustitia*, mother of *Pax*]
sovereign
for she has stripped the wicked of all power.

⁸⁸ Wieruszowski, 'Art and the Commune', p. 24, and Zorzi, 'Rituali di violenza', p. 418.

⁸⁹ Bellosi, *Buffalmacco e il Trionfo della Morte*; and Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata*, pp. 97–98.

(Senza paura ogn'uom franco camini | e lavorando semini ciascuno | mentre che sul
comuno manterrà questa donna in signoria | ch'el à levata a' rei ogni balia.)

The collection of frescoes is dominated by the fear and precarious balance of Peace, who is always threatened as soon as justice is violated and trampled upon. The *Bad Government* (*Malgoverno*) is watched over instead by *Timor*, equipped with a scroll that reads:

Here each one seeks his own [private interest, the opposite
of common good]
and Justice has become subdued by tyranny
along this road
no one travels without fear of death as both within and
without the walls there is nothing but robbery.

(per volere el ben proprio in questa terra | sommess'è la giustizia a tirannia | onde
per questa via | non passa alcun senza dubbio di morte ché fuor si robba e dentro
da le porte.)

At the feet of the *Bad Government* Justice lies on the ground with her symbols broken, surrounded by scenes of violence and killing. For this reason, it is necessary to be armed to keep tyranny far away, to put prisoners in chains, and to punish, holding in one's lap the head of a convict. The passage — which is significant — from the typical themes of the communal age of personal damnation to those more strongly ideologized of the good government is evident in the comparison of the frescoes of Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua and those by Lorenzetti in the Hall of Peace in Siena: if the former limits himself to neutral themes such as *Iustitia* and *Iniustitia*, the latter opposes the common good with its negation, that is, the *res publica* in the hands of tyranny.⁹⁰

The concepts of justice and of common good glorified in the fresco of *Good Government* in Siena belong to both the universe of politics and to that of preaching. They are inspired by the homiletics of preachers like the Dominican Remigio de' Girolami (1247–1319), who led the way inspired by the continuous fighting between factions. These concepts gave inspiration to preachers such as Bernardino da Siena (1380–1444), who, although living in a historical

⁹⁰ Cicero sustains that for the republic, it is necessary to view the political community of sovereign citizens as founded upon the law and upon the common good. *Res publica*, he writes, means 'matter of the *popolo*' (*res publica* = *res populi*) and adds that the *popolo* is not 'just any agglomerate of men gathered together in some random way, but a gathering of people linked by the agreement of observing justice and the commonality of interests': Cicero, *La Repubblica*, bk I, chap. 25, pp. 297–99. Cf. Poma, 'Res publica'.

period less obsessed by the internal struggle between political coalitions, dedicated more and more attention to these themes. It is interesting to note how the sermons of these street fabulators always revolved around the values of civic tranquillity and around the non-values of consortium practices, of revenge, and of every special interest that could undermine the common good of the city. Remigio, who belonged to one of the most powerful Florentine families of the government of the *popolo*, dedicated his most important writing to the central themes of communal political discourse: the two completed essays *De bono communi* and *De bono pacis*, along with an unfinished edition of a third essay, entitled *De iustitia*.⁹¹ The Dominican friar involved himself directly in political life by writing a series of sermons on peace and by collaborating on the drafting of the *Ordinances of Justice* (*Ordinamenta iustitiae*), together with other prelates. The awareness of the inseparable connection between peace and justice, derived from a careful analysis of the divisions that threaten civic concord, is expressed by Remigio in the recycling of the scriptural passage 'Erit opus iustitiae pax'.⁹² Both in his sermons and in his ethical and political essays, the friar works to understand and to promote the pacification of factional discord in the conviction that every discord can be resolved and every enmity pacified,⁹³ according to the principle for which peace is found in the ordered concord of citizens in the name of the common good, as is read at the beginning of his treatise *De bono pacis*.⁹⁴ When Bernardino da Siena later found himself in the early years of the *Quattrocento* citing the shared values of peace and common good, he continuously referred to Lorenzetti's fresco, asking his public to notice

the hanged man, in order to maintain justice: and, for these things, each will be in blessed peace and concord. On the contrary, turning to the other hand, I don't see merchandise, I don't see dances, yet I see the killing of others; they don't repair houses, yet they are broken down and burned, the land is not tilled, the vines are cut, there is no sowing, no one takes baths, nor other delightful things; I don't see, when one goes outside the city, neither ladies nor men: the dead man, the overwhelmed woman; I don't see livestock if not as prey: men killing each other by

⁹¹ Remigio de' Girolami, 'De bono communi'; Remigio de' Girolami, 'De bono pacis'; Capitani, 'L'incompiuto "tractatus de iustitia" di fra' Remigio de' Girolami († 1319)'.
⁹² Isaiah 32. 17.

⁹³ 'Omnis discordia potest concordari et omnis inimicitia pacificari, quaecumque sit ex parte unius excellens potentia vel gravis offensa vel diuturna inimicitia': Remigio de' Girolami, 'I "Sermoni sulla pace"', *Sermo* I, 75–77 (p. 77).

⁹⁴ 'Summum bonum multitudinis et finis eius est pax': Remigio de' Girolami, 'De bono pacis', p. 55.

surprise, Justice is on the ground with broken scales, and she is bound with hands and feet tied; and every thing one does is done with fear.⁹⁵

The Public Image of the Enemy

Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in many Italian cities, the authorities demonized their enemies in order to legitimize themselves, and the figure of the scapegoat became the instrument of communication to use for reinforcing civic values. The sacrificial rite served to destroy the public image of the enemy and to unleash the violence that existed in and of itself in the heart of the community upon him. It was a form of the epiphany of power, of an act that favours the birth of a sentiment shared by the members of the same community, of communication that utilized violence to achieve the reinforcement of the social and political unity of the body politic. Punishing the reprobates meant maintaining order and protecting upright citizens because it was through the repression of those who have broken the bond between God and the community that the political authority legitimized itself by making manifest its sovereign value. Through the repression of those who placed themselves outside of God's justice, the political authority rose to the role of punishing the violence suffered with still greater violence.⁹⁶

The social body is sacred, and it is defined by the shared recognition of civic space and by the places in which common rites are held. Public buildings, town squares, tribunals, and prisons become the places at the centre of the city in which corporal and shameful punishments are carried out while those placed outside of the urban space are utilized for the execution of death sentences.

⁹⁵ 'Impiccato l'uomo, per mantenere la giustizia: e, per queste cose, ognuno sta in santa pace e concordia. Per contrario, voltandomi da l'altra mano, non veggo mercanzie, non veggo balli, anco veggo uccidere altrui; non racconciano case, anco si guastano et ardono, non si lavora terre, le vigne tagliano, non si semina, non s'usano bagni, né altre cose dilettevoli; non veggo, quando si vada fuore, o donne o uomini: l'uomo morto, la donna sforzata; non veggo armenti, se none in preda: uomini a tradimento uccidere l'uno l'altro, la giustizia stare in terra, rotto le bilancie, e lei legata co' le mani e co' piei legati; et ogni cosa che altro fa, fa con paura': Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari inedite*, ed. by Pacetti, pp. 458–59. Cf. also Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 74–76. On the Sieneese *Good Government*, opposing interpretations can be found in Rubinstein, 'Political Ideas in Sieneese Art', and Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti'. On the same theme, see also Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 136–210, and Donato, 'Cose morali, e anche appartenenti secondo e' luoghi', pp. 492–95.

⁹⁶ Ricciardelli, 'La distruzione della memoria politica'. See also Sbriccoli, *Crimen laesae Maiestatis*; Viroli, *Dalla politica alla ragion di Stato*; Pellegrini, *Congiure di Romagna*.

From the second half of the *Duecento* on, the Italian communal city armed itself with penal instruments, placing pillories, stockades, cages, and columns in the principal areas of city life. In Pavia, Brescia, Parma, Piacenza, Florence, Rome, Venice, and Faenza, dissent was punished by making provisions for ignominious punishments that called for putting a mitre on the head of the criminal before parading him around the city, often times on an ass.⁹⁷ In Florence, but also in other Italian cities, the rite of offering (*oblatio*) permitted the guilty to enjoy the benefit of absolution by paying a certain quantity of money and submitting himself to public disgrace by walking from the prison to the baptistry of St John with a candle in his hand and a paper mitre on his head (his name and his crime were written on the mitre).⁹⁸

The dishonourable ritual of the destruction of political memory was reserved to all those who polluted the good government and the morality of the community. In Belluno, thieves were publicly whipped throughout the city, while in Pisa those guilty of bearing false witness were dragged by a hooked rope through their tongues (which were then amputated) and led across the city from the church of St Matthew to the church of St Vito. In Parma, according to the statutes of 1255, these types of criminals were lead around the city and flogged; in Lucca, according to the statutes of 1308, they were dragged through the city ('strascinetur per civitatem'); while in the Modena of 1327 false testimony was punished by flogging in the streets of the city ('fustigetur per civitatem').⁹⁹ In Arezzo in 1327 assassins and muggers in public places met with beheading,¹⁰⁰ the falsifiers suffered the amputation of their hands,¹⁰¹ perjurers suffered the cutting off of their tongues,¹⁰² thieves were hanged,¹⁰³ and arsonists were burned at the stake,¹⁰⁴ while blasphemers were condemned to being flogged throughout the entire city with a hook in the tongue ('cum uncino in

⁹⁷ Zorzi, 'La costruzione della città giudiziaria', pp. 226–30. Cf. also Miglio, 'Parola e gesto nella società comunale', pp. 54–55; Ortalli, 'Pingatur in Palatio'; Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy*; and Zorzi, Chiffolleau, and Gauvard, *Pratiques sociales et politiques judiciaires*. Specific examples are in Ruggiero, *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice*, and Zorzi, 'Le esecuzioni delle condanne a morte a Firenze'.

⁹⁸ Ricciardelli, 'Le modalità dell'esclusione politica'.

⁹⁹ Zorzi, 'La costruzione della città giudiziaria', pp. 237–38.

¹⁰⁰ *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 24, p. 209; bk iv, chap. 27, p. 210.

¹⁰¹ *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 28, pp. 210–11.

¹⁰² *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 28, p. 211.

¹⁰³ *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 31, pp. 212–13.

¹⁰⁴ *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)*, ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 48, p. 222.

lingua').¹⁰⁵ The statutory norms required the reading of the sentence out loud through the streets of the city so that the words pronounced by the town crier were heard by all, thereby becoming a clear and evident warning for the entire community. The town square was the pre-eminent place for exposing the guilty to public scorn, and the column at the square's centre served to reduce the number of crimes committed. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologiae*, underlines that public notoriety derives from the good reputation of the person and is the only possible way for man to become eternal. So when infamy damages political memory with the exposition of the criminal to banishment, confinement, pecuniary, or capital punishments, it is the community itself that collectively risks damnation.¹⁰⁶

The advent of governments of the *popolo* found its perfect scapegoat in the magnates: such forces must be repressed in order to avoid the creation of military autonomy. The repression put into effect by the governments of the *popolo* against the magnates in the final years of the *Duecento* was legitimized by the necessity to repress the private violence that such families unleashed, because it was the expression of a violent feudal nobility that had never been purged of this behaviour, even after its move from the countryside to the urban centre. Thus, in many cities of central and northern Italy, lists of proscription were drafted in which the families of the old ruling class were excluded from public office. The civic governments were occupied by the *popolo* which promulgated laws aimed at penalizing the urban and rural aristocracy, thereby giving life to a lexicon that found its points of strength exactly in the sphere of discrimination, as the cases of Bologna (1282), Prato (1292), and Florence (1293) demonstrate. I am referring to the *Sacred and Most Sacred Ordinances* of Bologna, to the *Sacred and Most Sacred Ordinances* of Prato, and to the *Ordinances of Justice* of Florence, all lists of proscriptions which were directed against aristocratic families who were known to possess a bellicose and ungovernable nature. These people were primarily barred from holding office; and if they committed certain crimes, their punishment could be doubled. The governments of the *popolo* provided the origin of the systematic repression of those who did not belong to their social group and of those who were held to be violently dangerous, as the chroniclers and intellectuals Bartolo da Sassoferrato and Baldo degli Ubaldi underline. In Bologna, Viterbo, Modena, Florence, and Imola, the peo-

¹⁰⁵ *Statuto di Arezzo* (1327), ed. by Camerani, bk iv, chap. 53, p. 223.

¹⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pars Prima, *Questio* V, *De bono in communi*, pp. 23-28, *Articulus* 5, *Utrum ratio boni consistat in modo, specie et ordine*, p. 25. On these themes, see Guerra, *Una eterna condanna*, pp. 88-94.

ple stigmatized the magnates as proud wolves, utilizing symbolic allusions from the Holy Scriptures and from Aesop in identifying them as wild animals ready to attack them, the gentle lambs.¹⁰⁷

This systematic attack launched at the end of the thirteenth century against the forces of the noble families by the *popolo* aimed to systematically destroy their political memory according to the same criteria which the Guelphs first utilized a few years earlier in the fight against the Ghibellines, enemies of society as heretics. Next to the magnates the lists of those executed singled out recidivous delinquents belonging to marginal social groups, vagabonds, and all those who breached the shared norms, violated the current laws within the sacred space, or were guilty of common offences. In Emilia and in Tuscany — above all, in the cities of Parma, Bologna, Pistoia, Florence, and Siena — there are examples of depictions of men hanged upside down which assume the role of typically shameful paintings. It becomes clear that the level of ceremonial efficiency of judiciary executions is always directly proportional to the capacity to make the punishment public, and that the expiation of the sentence reaffirms the social bond between *communitas* and citizen, automatically becoming a political instrument through which consensus is obtained. The walls of the public buildings, the gates of the cities, the facades of the main squares all become the canvas for this new typology of painting aimed at degrading the honour of those who lost their social dignity. The face of authority no longer revealed itself exclusively through the rites of Christian forgiveness but also through the violence of the punishments against the traitors who put the good government and the common good propagated by the regime at risk.¹⁰⁸

The political objective was of destroying the memory of the enemy in society's collective imagination. The civic chronicles describe capital executions and other scenes of justice underlining their value as examples, facilitating the

¹⁰⁷ Ravaggi, 'Appunti sulle forme di propaganda nel conflitto tra magnati e popolani', pp. 469–89 and Dessì, 'I nomi dei guelfi e ghibellini da Carlo I d'Angiò a Petrarca'. On the Biblical and Christian tradition in redefining of the wolf in the Middle Ages, see instead Ortalli, *Lupi, genti, culture*, pp. 95–107, where the historian underlines how the example of the Sacred and Most Sacred Ordinances drafted in Bologna in 1282 by volition of the peaceful citizens (the *agni mansueti*) against the aggressive and turbulent magnates (the *lupi rapaces*) met with success among coeval administrations because they were verifiable in other civic ordinances of the time: Ortalli, *Lupi, genti, culture*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁸ Ricciardelli, 'La distruzione della memoria politica'. On these themes, see also Migliorino, *Fama e infamia*, pp. 73–83; and Fenster and Smail, *The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*.

spreading of a pedagogy of terror that offered the physical anguish imposed by the authorities to the public. The statutes of the commune of Parma of 1255 speak of ignominious paintings with references to specific cases, requiring their exhibition in the town hall with the inscription of the name, surname, and the offence.¹⁰⁹ In 1292, the commune of Florence repressed the magnates by publicizing their poor behaviour, and the painter Fino di Tedaldo received a commission to paint a shameful composition representing figures in the act of ransacking the coffers of the state in the *Palazzo del Podestà*. The grotesque allegory is not directed towards narrating single episodes as much as it is intended to stigmatize the typical greed of the magnates and of all those who want to unjustly take possession of the resources of the city-state.¹¹⁰ In Venice in 1310, the infamy of the memory of the Tiepolo family, which attempted to impose its own name in the city, was disgraced with the inscription placed on a column of the ruins of one of that family's houses. It reads: 'This was Bajamonte's land, and now because of his wicked acts of betrayal, and because of the fear he caused the city, it has been confiscated by the state as a warning to all and to forever demonstrate justice.'¹¹¹ Such punishments are so burdensome and influential that in Bologna a young citizen confessed under torture of having tried to detach the fresco that dishonoured his father in the city's town hall.¹¹² In Rome the crushing supremacy of the barons was stigmatized by Cola di Rienzo (1313–54), in power between May and December of 1347, and by his followers through the association of the barons to wolves.¹¹³

In the course of the first decade of the *Trecento* in Siena, the councils of the commune assiduously discussed the forms of repression, with the goal of achieving the common good.¹¹⁴ In 1330, still in Siena, the councils had the

¹⁰⁹ 'In palatio communis et subscribatur litteris grossis nomen praenomen et causa': *Statuta communis Parmae*, ed. by Ronchini, p. 441.

¹¹⁰ Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, v, 602. On the iconology of Justice, see Sbriccoli, 'La benda della Giustizia'; and Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata*.

¹¹¹ 'De Bajamonte fo questo terreno, e mo per lo so iniquo tradimento, posto in comun et per l'altrui spavento, e per mostrar a tutti sempre senno': Zorzi, 'Rituali di violenza', p. 411.

¹¹² Lansing, *Passion and Order*, p. 181.

¹¹³ Maire Vigueur, *L'altra Roma*, pp. 278–82. On Cola di Rienzo, see Maire Vigueur, 'Cola di Rienzo'; Miglio, 'Gruppi sociali e azione politica nella Roma di Cola di Rienzo'; Falconieri, *Cola di Rienzo*; Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome*.

¹¹⁴ 'In consellio [...] che sia da fare de' falsatori dipenti nel palazzo et case del comune di Siena, se esse dipenture sieno da spegnere o no': *Il Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato*, ed. by Lisini, II, 271–72.

same theme as a priority, commissioning Simone Martini to paint in the Hall of the Nine an upside down Marco Regoli, a rebel of the commune sentenced to death by hanging.¹¹⁵ It is written in the Florentine statutes of the captain of the *popolo* of 1322–25 that in the case a failed merchant escapes, the *podestà* and the captain of the *popolo* were obligated to have his image painted in the *Palazzo del Podestà* so that it could be seen publicly.¹¹⁶ The sources underline that such a punishment in effigy, in the same way as banishment and confinement, involves both the members of the family of the criminal as well as everyone around him, for which the criminal's escape is extended from the individual to the trade he belongs to: on this the Florentine statute of the captain of the *popolo* reveals that the name and surname of the criminal had to be clearly written along with the name of the trade which he dishonoured.¹¹⁷

The Scapegoat

The repression of the guilty through penal ceremony reinforced the social consensus by legitimizing authority. The identification of the criminal with Judas, the negative evangelical model *par excellence*, authorized the punishment of inconsistent social behaviour which manifested itself in the marginalization of the condemned party in order to maintain the common good. The offences toward public affairs materialized into the lynching of the offender in the town square. Sometimes the crowd pulled the body of the person sentenced to death from the judiciary authorities in order to inflict its rage upon him both before and after the execution.¹¹⁸ Mitchell B. Merback writes that in the late Middle Ages the spectacle of justice became a central element of society and that 'late medieval realist painters presented the sacred scene of the Crucifixion in terms of their own, but more importantly their audience's, experiences with criminal

¹¹⁵ Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, pp. 99–100.

¹¹⁶ 'Facere pingi in palatio Potestatis in muro dicti palatii, ita quod videri possit palam et publice': *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Caggese and others, I: *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo*, bk II, chap. 54, p. 115.

¹¹⁷ 'De lictera grossa et patenti facere scribi nomen et prenomen talis qui sic cessaverit, et vocabulum artis de qua talis cessans et fugitivus fuerit': *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Caggese and others, I: *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo*, bk II, chap. 54, p. 115.

¹¹⁸ Edgerton, *Pictures and Punishment*; Niccoli, *Infanzie: funzioni di un gruppo liminale*; Niccoli, *Il seme della violenza*; Fineschi, *Cristo e Giuda*; Fineschi, 'Insults of the Living and Fear of the Dead'; Smail, *The Consumption of Justice*.

justice rituals'.¹¹⁹ For contemporaries the image of the Crucifixion has a symbolic value that goes beyond that which could be defined as an iconography of justice,

the intervisual dynamic between art and spectacle [...]. Both kinds of experience, one lived out collectively in the theatre of public punishment, the other enacted sometimes publicly, but often privately, before the Passion altarpiece (where the Crucifixion was typically central and defining), unfolded within the same mental boundaries, fell into the same perceptual schema and were conditioned by the same social and cultural factors.¹²⁰

The gesture of the undressing of the cadaver was at the same time political and religious, and it allowed for the restabilizing of urban concord through the cancelling of the existence of the community's enemy. The mutilation of the body and its dismemberment, usually carried out by young boys, reached its apex in the moment of dragging the body by the feet through the entire city. Sometimes the corpse was buried to only be disinterred so that it did not receive a proper Christian burial. The elimination of the criminal and the mutilation of the cadaver were sacred and political acts from the moment that these transgressors led the community to perdition. Thus, the infliction of the anticipated infernal punishment made reconciliation with God possible. The punishment of dissent, whether adopted by republican or seignorial governments, was realized in the deconsecration of the body of the political nemesis. In Florence, tyranny was associated with the government of the duke of Athens, Walter of Brienne (1302–56), who was besieged together with his functionaries on 26 July 1343, in the *Palazzo della Signoria* by the crowd in revolt against the foreign usurper. The painting attributed to Orcagna (c. 1310–68), known as *The Expulsion of the Duke of Athens*, highlights a broken sword, the scales thrown on the ground, and a book of laws — the statutes — left closed, with the evident intention of representing republican values trampled upon by he (the Duke of Athens by then on the run) who violated these symbols of justice with his behaviour. The duke succeeded in escaping, but this was not the case of his functionaries, on whom the *popolo* carried out a series of atrocious punishments. Giovanni Villani writes that on 30 July 1343, the notary Arrigo Fei,

who was in charge of taxation, while fleeing up Via de' Servi dressed as a friar, was recognized at the Gate of San Gallo, was killed, and then dragged naked around the city by young boys, and then in the square of the priors was strung up by his

¹¹⁹ Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel*, p. 21.

¹²⁰ Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel*, p. 21.

feet, and was tied up and butchered like a pig: this was the end of his industrious attempts to create new taxes, and of the cruelty of the others named above.¹²¹

An anonymous chronicler of Pistoia adds that

he was dragged by boys throughout the city of Florence, and then he was tied in the square of the duke's palace by the feet, as pigs are tied, then his hands were attached to the beams of a horse travis, and he was cut open and his heart was pulled out and carried on the end of a lance throughout all of Florence.¹²²

The chronicler Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, drawing heavily from Villani's description, takes notice of several important details related to the undressing of the corpses, which confirms their being taken by young boys and dragged through the city streets with the *Piazza della Signoria*, the sacred space of power, as the final destination:

While the *popolo* of Florence besieged the duke and fought for the palace for the liberty of the city, some officials of the duke were found, among whom were a notary and some of the family members of the main officer (*Conservadore*), who were killed by the furor of the crowd. Messer Simone da Norcia, a judge of civil law who had condemned many citizens through his office and in his punishments had seemed more cruel than necessary and had many people beheaded, met the same fate. The captain of the duke's household, a Neapolitan and a notary, was vilely dismembered once he was taken. Ser Arrigo Fei, who had been the duke's deputy in the tax office, an astute man who sought out fraud, fled dressed as a friar, but was recognized at the city gates and killed. Then the youths of the city got hold of him, tore off his clothes, and dragged him through the city until they reached the piazza, where the dregs of the *popolo* (*popolazzo*) hung him by his feet from the gallows and butchered him like a pig. And for the others of his brigade it ended badly.¹²³

¹²¹ 'Ch'era sopra le gabelle, fuggendosi da' Servi vestito come frate, conosciuto da San Gallo fu morto, e poi da' fanciulli tranato ignudo per tutta la città, e poi in sulla piazza de' priori impeso per li piedi, e sparato e sbarrato come porco: tal fine ebbe della sua isforzata industria di trovare nuove gabelle, e lli altri di su detti della loro crudeltà': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 17, p. 338.

¹²² 'Fue strascinato per li garzoni per tutta la città di Firenze, e possa fue regato alla piazza al palagio del duga e per li piedi, a guisa di porco, fue apiccato a uno 'travaglio di cavalli, e fue sparato e trattoli lo cuore del corpo e portato sulle punte delle lance per tutta Firenze': 'Storie pistoresi', ed. by Barbi, rub. 113, pp. 190–91.

¹²³ 'Mentrechè il popolo di Firenze assediava il Duca, e combatteano il palagio per la libertà della città, furono trovati alcuni uficiali del Duca, ciò fu un notaio ed alcuni famigli del Conservadore, i quali a furore di popolo furono morti. Messer Simone da Norcia, iudice delle ragioni, il quale molti cittadini avea condannati per suo uficio, e nel tormentare pare che fusse

Giovanni Villani provides ulterior details about the revolt, writing that after five days of siege, Walter of Brienne was forced by his soldiers to abandon a close collaborator and the collaborator's son, Gabriele, to the revenge of the Florentines:

The duke seeing himself in such a situation consented; and Friday, the First of August, at the hour of dinner the Borgognoni took Guiglielmo d'Ascesi, one who promoted the tyrannies of the duke, and an 18 year-old son of his, recently knighted by the duke, but a criminal and traitor in tormenting citizens, and they pushed him out into the entry hall of the building into the hands of the angry mob, and of relatives and friends who his father had executed, Altoviti, Medici, Oricellai, and those of the main Bettone clan, and still others, who in the presence of his father, more for his pain, they butchered and dismembered the son, who was pushed out first, into small pieces; and having done this they did the same to d'Ascesi, and they carried the bodyparts on the ends of their lances and swords around the entire city; and full of such cruelty, and with such bestial and burning fury, they ate of their flesh, raw and cooked.¹²⁴

Villani underlines the contradictions of the Florentines who are first victims of the Duke's authority and then executioners of it, 'however that it is a memory of the fault and shame of our Commune, what we did to our *signore*'.¹²⁵

crudele più non si richiedeva, e fece tagliare il capo a molte persone, e similmente fu fatto a lui. Il capitano della famiglia del Duca, ch'era un napoletano, ed era notaio, ancora preso, fu vilmente spezzato. Ser Arrigo Fei, lo quale era [...] sopra le gabelle diputato dal Duca, uomo astuto ed a trovare ed a ricercare il frodo, si fuggiva vestito come frate, ed uscendo fuori delle porte della città fu conosciuto, e fu morto. Di che i fanciulli della città lo presero, e stracciatigli li panni, strascinato da loro per la città, e poi recato in sulla piazza, il popolazzo lo 'mpiccò per i piedi in su una forca, e spararonlo, come fusse un porco. E poi altri della sua brigada capitarono male': Stefani, *Cronaca fiorentina*, ed. by Rodolico, rub. 583, p. 208.

¹²⁴ 'Il duca veggendosi a tal partito acconsentì; e venerdì, a dì primo d'agosto, in sull'ora della cena i Borgognoni presono meser Guiglielmo d'Ascesi, detto conservadore delle tirannie del duca, e un suo figliuolo d'età di XVIII anni, di poco fatto cavaliere per lo duca, ma bene era reo e fellone a tormentare i cittadini, e pinsollo fuori dell'antiporto del palagio in mano dell'arrabbiato popolo, e di parenti e amici cui il padre avea giustiziati, Altoviti, Medici, Oricellai, e quelli di Bettone principali, e più altri, i quali in presenza del padre per più suo dolore, il suo figliuolo pinto fuori inanzi il tagliarono e smembrarono a minuti pezzi; e.cciò fatto pinsono fuori il conservadore e feciono il somigliante, e chi.nne portava un pezzo in sulla lancia e.cchi in sulla spada per tutta la città; ed ebbevi de' sì crudeli, e con furia bestiale e tanto animosa, che mangiaro delle loro carni cruda e cotta': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 17.

¹²⁵ 'Però ch'è memoria del difetto e vergogna del nostro Comune, che 'l facemmo nostro signore': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XIII, chap. 34.

The chronicles of an anonymous writer describe the lynching that Cola di Rienzo and the Roman populace — which identified itself with him in the moment of the Babylonian captivity of the papacy in Avignon — carried out against the barons.¹²⁶ The destruction of the political memory of Cola's political adversaries is marked by the example of the execution of Martino da Porto degli Stefaneschi, who

with his hands tied behind his back, was forced to his knees on the steps near the statue of the lion [...]. There his death sentence was heard. They allowed him to confess himself to the priest. They condemned him to the gallows, and he was hung on the flat area of the Campidoglio. From a distance his lady could see him from the balcony.¹²⁷

The type of executions to which Cola subjects the barons, enemies of the *popolo*, is taken up in the narration of the anonymous Roman when he describes the lynching of Cola himself; killed and dragged through the streets of Rome, Cola was decapitated and hung from the loggia of the Campidoglio where he himself usually sentenced others.

The chronicler recounts how the legs were detached from the trunk of the politician's body and how a band of youths, known as *zitielli*, gave the remains of the corpse to the Jews after two days so that they could arrange for their incineration:

Taken by the arms, he was conducted along the staircase, to the place of the lion, where [...] he had sentenced others [...]. A man came with a rope and tied both his feet. They threw him on the floor, and dragged him, stabbed him. They pierced him as though he were a sieve. Everyone made fun of him [...] he was dragged to the church of Saint Marcello. There he was hung by his feet to a small balcony. He had no head. Pieces of skin lay in the street along which he had been dragged. He had so many open wounds that he seemed like a sieve. No part of his body was free from wounds. His swollen intestines hung outside. He was horribly bloated, as white as milk covered with blood. He was so bloated that he looked like an enormous buffalo or a butchered cow. He hung there [at St. Marcello's] for two days and one night. The young boys hit him with stones. On the third day, by order of Giugurta and Sciarretta of the Colonna family, he was dragged to the field of Augustus [the then deserted area around the Mausoleum of Augustus]. There all the Jews gath-

¹²⁶ Maire Vigueur, *L'altra Roma*, pp. 290–96.

¹²⁷ 'Legatoli le mano dereto, fu fatto innocchiare nelle scale canto lo lione [...]. Là odio la sentenza de soa morte. A pena lo lassao confessare perfettamente allo priete. Alle forche lo conannao, perché avea derobata la galea sorrenata. Menato così mannifico omo alle forche, nello piano de Campituoglio fu appeso. Soa donna da longa per li balconi lo poteva vedere': Anonimo Romano, *Cronica*, ed. by Porta, p. 119.

ered in great numbers: none of them refrained from going. A fire was lit there with dry sticks and weeds. He was put into the fire. He was fat. Because of the amount of fat he burned easily. The Jews were very busy feeding the flames. They stoked the weeds so they burned. Thus that corpse was burned and was reduced to dust: there didn't remain even the smallest piece.¹²⁸

A few years later, again in Florence, an anonymous chronicler notes that with regard to the tumults promoted by the Ciompi in 1378, 'certain Flemish persons that were going around stealing, there were four of them' in the houses and shops,¹²⁹ taking advantage of the confusion caused by the moment, were hanged:

one was hanged from the Prato Ognissanti gate, the other in Santa Maria Novella square from an iron window, next to the Ponzocheri Hospital, and another in the Old Market (*Mercato Vecchio*), next to a column under one of those coverings of the Tavernai loggia, the fourth was [taken] to the *Piazza della Signoria*, and here a pair of gallows was immediately made and here was hanged the fourth Flemish';¹³⁰ on this subject the same anonymous chronicler continues by underlining that 'hence thieves and robbers, seeing people hanged thusly, become fewer in number.'¹³¹

¹²⁸ 'Preso per le vraccia, liberamente fu addutto per tutte le scale senza offesa fi' allo luoco dello liono, dove [...] esso sentenziao atri aveva [...]. Venne uno con una fune e annodaoli tutti doi li piedi. Dierolo in terra, strascinavano, scortellavano. Così lo passavano come fussi crivello. Onneuno ne.sse iocava [...] fu strascinato fi' a Santo Marciello. Là fu appeso per li piedi a uno mignaniello. Capo non aveva. erano remase le cocce per la via donne era strascinato. Tante ferute aveva, pareva crivello. Non era luoco senza feruta. La mazza de fòra grasse. Grasso era orribilmente, bianco come latte insanguinato. Tanta era la sua grassezza, che pareva uno esmesurato bufalo overo vacca a maciello. Là pennéo dii doi, notte una. Li zitielli li iettavano le prete. Lo terzo die de commannamento de Iugurta e de Sciarretta della Colonna fu strascinato allo campo dell'Austa. Là se adunaro tutti Iudiei in granne moitudine: non ne remase uno. Là fu fatto uno fuoco de cardi secchi. In quello fuoco delli cardi fu messo. Era grasso. Per la moita grassezza da sé ardeva volentieri. Staievano là li Iudiei forte affaccennati, afforosi, affociti. Attizzavano li cardi perché ardessi. Così quello cuorpo fu arzo e fu ridotto in polve: non ne remase cica': Anonimo Romano, *Cronica*, ed. by Porta, p. 197.

¹²⁹ 'Cierti fiamminghi ch'andavano rubando, che furono quattro': 'Diario d'anonimo fiorentino dall'anno 1358 al 1389', ed. by Gherardi, p. 359.

¹³⁰ 'L'un fu impiccato al Prato Ognissanti, l'altro in sulla piazza di Santa Maria Novella a una finestra ferrata, allato a l'Ospedale de' Pinzocheri, e l'altro in Mercato Vecchio, allato a una colonna sotto un di que' tetti della loggia de' Tavernai, l'altro quarto fu [tratto] in sulla piazza di nostri Signori, ed ivi subito fu fatto un paio di forche e ivi fu impiccato il quarto fiammingo': 'Diario d'anonimo fiorentino dall'anno 1358 al 1389', ed. by Gherardi, pp. 359–60.

¹³¹ 'Onde i ladri e rubatori, veggendo così impicare, si ristettono': 'Diario d'anonimo fiorentino dall'anno 1358 al 1389', ed. by Gherardi, p. 360.

The public spectacle of the destruction of the scapegoat's memory became an instrument of political propaganda, and the publicization of its cancellation from society became part of the agenda of jurists like Alberto da Gandino (1278–1310), who in his *Tractatus de Maleficiis* sustains the exemplary nature of the punishment.¹³² In Venice, the guilty from the prisons of the Ducal Palace were always tied to a pole on a barge and symbolically expelled from the city, where they were tortured and mutilated to then be led back into St Mark's Square, where death was inflicted upon them between the two columns of the adjoining smaller square, near the ducal palace, under the high-relief containing the image of the allegory of Venice in the form of Justice with sword in hand.¹³³ In Florence on 30 April 1389, the Franciscan Michele Berti da Calci was sentenced to death for heresy. Pronounced by the captain of the *popolo*, Niccolò Gentile da Monterano, Michele da Calci's sentence was extremely rich with details about his feelings, his behaviour, about his reaction, and about the collective feelings that an event of its kind is able to arouse in the petrified spectators who are present along the streets and squares of the city. Michele was forced into a macabre *via crucis* in which he carried on a dialogue with the crowd, among which there were those who help him, those who asked for his blessing, and, naturally, those who insulted him. A coeval anonymous author writes that

In the square of the granary, there being many women at their windows, and money-changers, and people that were gambling, who were saying to him: repent, repent; and he was saying back to them: All of you repent of your sins of usury, of gambling, of fornicating. And further on many were saying to him: do not desire death, foolish that you are; and he was saying back: I want to die for Christ. And one, among the others, went to him being very quarrelsome for a good while, saying to him: you are a martyr of the devil; do you think you know more than all these teachers?¹³⁴

¹³² 'Opus est exemplo ut pena unius sit metus multorum': Alberto da Gandino, *Tractatus de Maleficiis*, II: *Die Theorie*, p. 348.

¹³³ Ruggiero, 'Constructing Civic Morality', p. 175.

¹³⁴ 'Alla piazza del Grano, essendovi molte donne alle finestre, e tavolieri, et gente che giucava, gli diceano: pentiti, pentiti; e quei diceva: pentitevi de' peccati de l'usure, del giucare, delle fornicazioni. E più oltre dicendogli molti: non voler morire, sciocco che tu se'; ed egli diceva: io voglio morir per Cristo. Et uno, infra gli altri, gli andò dando molta briga per più di una balustrata, dicendogli: tu se' martire del diavolo; credi tu saper più che tanti maestri': Piazza, 'La passione di Frate Michele', p. 254. Anthropological aspects of Michele Berti da Calci's case have been studied by Baker, 'The Death of a Heretic, Florence 1389'.

The punishment of an act of subversion reestablished social command and, above all, political balance. Thus in November of 1393 the Republic of Florence made provisions for many types of confinements and numerous death sentences (what is known as the ‘announcement of the gallows’ — *bando delle forche*)¹³⁵ for political dissidents, in the same way that in the Ferrara of the Este family capital punishment is carried out publicly according to a ceremony with strong symbolic content against thieves, perjurers, assassins, arsonists, spies, rapists, sodomites, heretics, traitors, and conspirators.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ *Alle bocche della piazza*, pp. 83, 164, and 165.

¹³⁶ Mazzi, ‘Gente a cui si fa notte innanzi sera’.

THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL SUBORDINATION

The City and its Territory: A Shared Political Model

Between the mid-fourteenth and the mid-fifteenth centuries in Tuscany — as, more generally, in the rest of Italy — new political and social systems reached the height of their development as they moved decidedly toward the progressive concentration of power (in the oligarchic and seignorial sense). In the major Tuscan cities, the forms of communal government turned into closed political regimes in which restricted groups of representatives from magnate families progressively close ranks around a ruling class intent upon legitimizing itself and propagating its forms of government as dispensers of peace and social stability. Between the *Trecento* and the *Quattrocento*, the largest urban centres of Italian power became territorial dominions capable of holding the communes together and of preserving their long-standing autonomy. The large cities presented on the Italian peninsula constructed their own civic identities in different ways, utilizing political messages aimed at subduing, administrating, and maintaining their own *comitatus*, which was that part of the territory formerly subject to the local count and which in most cases coincided with the diocese, that part of the territory over which the civic bishops exercised their political authority for centuries. The conquest of the *territorium* was carried out with the use of force and by taking advantage of the appeal the city exerted as much over the noble families of the *contado* as over the rural landowners.¹

¹ In the third decade of the fifteenth century, the Florentine territorial domain reached

The expansion of the territory implies the resolution of the problem of the rural *signorie*. In order to affirm its authority, Florence fought from the outset against important families of great territorial overlords, such as the Alberti, the Guidi, and the Cadolingi families, all noble dynasties capable of being major players in the internal conflicts between Tuscan cities. The decisive phase of the formation of the Florentine state occurred in the period of the population depression of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, between the demographic peak in the early *Trecento* and the beginning of a new population increase in the second half of the *Quattrocento*. In 1350 Florence annexed Prato; in 1351, Pistoia (definitively subdued in 1401); in 1353, San Gimignano; in 1361, Volterra; in 1384, Arezzo; in 1390, Montepulciano; in 1406, Pisa; in 1409, Sarzana (subjected again between 1422 and 1468, and definitively Florentine since 1488); in 1411, Cortona; and finally, simultaneous with the annexation of many zones of the Apennines, Florence annexed Livorno in 1421. In 1440 the landed estates of Poppi, Anghiari, San Sepolcro, Montevarchi, and Badia Tedalda of the Casentino region were included into the Florentine territory, and in the second half of the same century Fivizzano (1477) and Pietrasanta (1484) became part of the Florentine dominion as well.²

The affirmation of Siena, blocked by Florence in the north-east, developed toward the south into southern Tuscany and implicated the progressive breakup of the ample domain of the Aldobrandeschi family (and of the allied Orsini, Santaflora, and Ottieri families), of the powerful Abbey of San Salvatore at Monte Amiata, and of the city of Orvieto. The result was the composition of a vast geographical territory with a dense network of castled villages that was, however, not heavily populated. Its territorial definition arrived in the 1420s and was maintained all but unchanged until the Medici reforms of 1555 consequent to its annexation by Florence. Until this moment, Siena was at the head of a territory that did not contain other important urban centres, even though they could be defined as cities, as they had a bishop's seat: Grosseto, Chiusi, Sovana, and, thanks to Pope Pius II Piccolomini, Pienza. The dioceses of Massa

the dimensions of a small state of about 11,000 km²; the Siennese territory, penalized by the low population density of the Maremma area, covered an area of about 6,700 km²; and the size of the territory of Lucca was about 1,000 km²; Zorzi, 'La formazione e il governo del dominio territoriale fiorentino', p. 190. On the relationship between the city and the civic territory, see Mucciarelli, Piccinni, and Pinto, *La costruzione del dominio cittadino sulle campagne*.

² On the phases of Florentine expansionism between the fourteenth and fifteenth century, see *Egemonia fiorentina ed autonomie locali*; Luzzati, *Firenze e la Toscana nel Medioevo*, pp. 168–72; Salvadori, *Dominio e patronato*, pp. 13–31; Pirillo, *Creare comunità*. On Siena and Lucca, see Isaacs, 'Le altre Toscani'; Shaw, 'Political Élités in Siena and Lucca'.

Marittima and of large sections of those of Arezzo and Volterra, and the area of Castro, including the communities of Monticiano, Capalbio, and Orbetello, were part of this territory.³

In the case of Lucca, as well, political control was maintained over an extremely vast territory, which was perceived by the Lucchesi as coinciding with the diocese. This perception implicates the strengthening of the dominant city's political weight in a centrifugal manner with respect to the Serchio river valley, an area over which control had already been exercised for centuries. Here, the peak of territorial formation was reached in the period of Castruccio Castracani degli Antelminelli, lord of the city since 1320, who then became duke and imperial vicar in 1327. This peak, which corresponded with the control of Pistoia, Luni, and Volterra, was followed by a long phase of subjection to foreign lords, which resulted in the progressive decline of the city from the Tuscan political scene beginning in 1369. From this moment forward, Lucca continued to cultivate its territorial state, including the urban centres of Massa Lunense (conquered by the Malaspina family in 1445), Pietrasanta (occupied by the Florentines in 1484), and Camaiore (the Garfagnana region of Tuscany was definitively conquered by the Florentines in 1513) — together with the other strongholds of Stazzema, Serravalle, and Seravezza in Versilia —, but above all, it turned its political attention to internal interests, protecting its high walls and reconfirming its political independence as 'land of the Empire'.⁴

The political propaganda intended to persuade the respective internal and external communities helped the territorial consolidation of the most important Italian republics. The societies that ended up under their aegis were obligated to pay taxes and duties, to accept foreign rectors for the principal public offices, to let their territory be managed by captains elected from the most influential families from the cities that conquered them, and to surrender their own castles, thereby allowing foreign powers to call into question their deep-rooted communal traditions.⁵ The major Italian republics enacted a plan of

³ Caferro, 'City and Countryside in Siena'; Zorzi, 'Politica e istituzioni in Toscana', pp. 30–38.

⁴ The diocese of Lucca, and therefore of its territory, extended north to include the Low Garfagnana region — the High Garfagnana region was part of the diocese of Luni —, while the southern border coincided with the diocese of Volterra passing under Palaia and San Gervasio; towards the northwest, the border stretched to the coast and included Versilia; while the border of the Pisan diocese and *contado* was delimited by natural elements, that is, by Massaciuccoli Lake, by the Pisan mountains, and by Sesto Lake; while in the east, towards Pistoia, the Lucchesi staked claims over the Val di Nievole until Montecatini, Monsummano, and Vaiano. On the phases of Lucchese expansionism, see Osheim, *An Italian Lordship*.

⁵ Zorzi, 'Ordine pubblico e amministrazione della giustizia'.

gradual submission in their own territory, intended not as the violent oppression of rivals but as the imposition of a model to be recognized as 'better' through the use of a shared political language aimed at promoting that which constantly recurred in the coeval public documents and in the civic chronicles: the capacity to guarantee the peaceful and tranquil state (*pacificum at tranquillum statum*) of its territory.⁶

Florence began to construct its model of *dominatrix* through the skilful use of rhetoric, promoting itself as the standard of authority capable of dominating its surrounding territory while respecting the local identities and shared values. At the beginning of the *Trecento*, the city developed a strategic policy aimed at consolidating its position in the *contado* in opposing the last remnants of rural feudal society.⁷ Siena imposed itself as the dominant city over its territory thanks to the paucity of surrounding towns, given that even the more important urban centres such as Massa Marittima and Montalcino were considered only as 'almost cities'.⁸ The space over which Lucca began to advance its claims in the thirteenth century corresponded with a variegated mosaic of political subjects that exercised powers and rights of diverse nature and origin over extended areas, a situation owed to the fact that within the diocese there existed at least three important territorial *signorie*: that of the bishopric (which extended over numerous castles situated in the Serchio Valley immediately north of the city), that of the San Martino chapter house (which controlled several villages in the Freddana Valley near the sea), and that of the Sesto Abbey (which dominated various communities located around the lake of the same name). In reality, these territorial *signorie*, despite minor tensions, never caused serious worry to the Lucchesi; the bishop, the canons of the cathedral, and the abbot continued to be expressions of civic society and on no occasion did they put into question their loyalty to the commune.⁹

The essentially celebrative approach of political messages expressed in the consular and *podestà* phases was accompanied by an institutional and individ-

⁶ On the relationship between propaganda and power, not only in Tuscany, see Cammarosano, *Le forme della propaganda politica*; Miglio and Lombardi, *Simbolo e realtà della vita urbana*; Chiffolleau, Martines, and Bagliani, *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali*; Brown, *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy*; Ricciardelli, 'Propaganda politica e rituali urbani nella Arezzo'.

⁷ Ricciardelli, 'Le forme rituali della politica tra Firenze e le città dominate'.

⁸ Chittolini, "Quasi città".

⁹ Poloni, 'Strutturazione del mondo corporativo e affermazione del Popolo a Lucca nel Duecento'.

ual authoritarianism derived from the aristocratic identity of the ruling class. The themes of political propaganda were tied to the demonization of the external enemy and of anyone who rebelled against the civic authority, to concepts related to the civic sovereignty over the territory, to the necessity of waging war, to submission, and to victory. In the case of Florence, the diffusion of the political model to be imposed is visible in the inscription of the foundation of the Bargello (1255), in which the republic anticipated the political formulas it would later adopt in the course of its territorial expansion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Florence, in giving life to its own *Palazzo dei Priori* (now *Palazzo della Signoria*), promoted itself, just like many other central and northern Italian cities did, as *caput mundi*, as the dominant fulcrum of a still disputed though still not very vast territory.¹⁰ Twelve years earlier, the abbot of the *Badia* laid the first stone for the reconstruction of the church of Saint Simon and Jude with the complicity of an uncountable number of the faithful and the curious: such an event was celebrated with another inscription, which asks that Florence be given priority over all other 'Latin cities' (*città latine*), not excluding even Rome and Paris.¹¹

Florence constructed itself, therefore, as *caput mundi* in the collective imagination: between 1299 and 1350 the city promoted the creation of new lands and fortified towns unquestionably for military purposes; but above all, this program was put into effect in order to lay the foundation for a new and diverse form of economic development which exempted the 'new towns' which placed themselves under Florence's dominion from all taxes. In some cases, such exemptions lasted for a decade exactly because they responded to a propagandistic project evidently intended to favour emigration from the dominant city and to propagate the diffusion of the Florentine civic model outside of its own walls.¹² Through its own *podestà*, Bartolomeo di Rainaldino, Siena proposed

¹⁰ 'Que mare, que terram, que totum possidet orbem; per quam regnantem fit felix Tuscia tota': MacCracken, *The Dedication Inscription of the Palazzo del Podestà in Florence*, pp. 5 and 8, n. 15.

¹¹ Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, II, 391.

¹² On what are known as the 'new towns', see Moretti, *Le terre nuove del contado fiorentino*; on the expansion between the thirteenth and fourteenth century of the city toward the territory as an expression of the Florentine ruling class, I refer the reader to Friedman, *The Florentine New Towns*. For an interpretation of the problem of founding new urban centers, see Friedman and Pirillo, *Le terre nuove*; on the techniques and strategies of the new foundations advanced by Florence in the late medieval period, see instead Pirillo, *Creare comunità*. The expansion into the territory also depended heavily upon investments put forward by private individuals, as demonstrated by the case of Scarperia. This 'new town', founded in 1306, was defended in 1351 from

an ample ideological legitimization of the political regime between 1203 and 1204 with the inauguration of what is known as the *Caleffo Vecchio*, the *liber iurium* in which the most important records of the commune were transcribed. This source reveals not only the conscience of a growing urban centre and the necessity of the commune to emphasize the existence of an institutional system based on good government, civic peace, and justice, but it also reveals the reality of a city-state that with this codex intended to collect the transcription of all acts of submission to the commune of Siena forced upon the nobles, castles, and towns of the surrounding territory.¹³

In 1214 Siena promotes the construction in its territory of a new castle on the border with the enemy Florence as a function of military colonization. In violating an established tradition of conquering only existing castles, the city opened a new, foundational phase in the *contado* which placed the celebratory impact at the centre of its political communication. The foundational inscription of the castle of Monteriggioni, the new defensive bastion in the fight against Florence, clearly states the date of the endeavour and the names of the current *podestà*, his judge, and his treasury officer.¹⁴ The subjection of castles and lands is confirmed several years later in the propagandistically self-commendatory preface to what is known as the *Memorial of the Offences of the Commune of Siena* (*Memoriale delle offese del comune di Siena*), whose compilation was ordered in 1223 by the *podestà* Bonifazio di Guido Guicciardi in order to emphasize all of the eventual offences that the subjected communities inflicted upon the Siennese commune.¹⁵ The same institutional authori-

the Visconti siege by Giovanni di Conte dei Medici, captain of the republic of Florence in the Mugello region: since the 1260s the Medici, in fact, were in possession of a discrete number of towns in this area whose protection favoured the financial interests of the Florentine republic: Tarassi, 'I Medici dalle origini al Quattrocento', pp. 10–12.

¹³ While Bartolomeo di Rainaldino was *podestà*, the number of inhabitants of Siena grew and the terms 'peace' (*pax*) and 'justice' (*iustitia*) reigned, because of all the virtues that were required of his office he was 'mirabiliter insignitus': Cecchini, *Il Caleffo Vecchio del comune di Siena*, I, 3. On these themes, see Artifoni, 'Retorica e organizzazione del linguaggio politico', pp. 175–77; on the optimistic tone of this source, dictated above all by the population increase of those years, see Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 309–10.

¹⁴ Cammarosano, *Monteriggioni*, p. 44.

¹⁵ 'Il Memoriale delle offese fatte al comune e ai cittadini di Siena', ed. by Banchi. For more information on the details of this source, I refer the reader to Ascheri, 'Statuti, legislazione e sovranità', pp. 151–52; to the revised and updated reprinting in Ascheri, *Antica legislazione della Repubblica di Siena*, pp. 1–40; and to Artifoni, 'Retorica e organizzazione del linguaggio politico', pp. 177–79. 'Il Memoriale delle offese' contains the depictions of the effigies of the *podestà*

tarianism was resumed in the moment of the expansion that Siena carried out between 1242 and 1254 to the detriment of one of the major noble houses of its *contado*, that of the Aldobrandeschi.¹⁶ The promulgation of the political model was also carried out through the imposition of architectonic styles developed in the dominant city, as demonstrated by the construction of the fortified grange of Cuna, or by the modalities of construction in Buonconvento of the Sienese gate and of *Palazzo Pretorio*;¹⁷ or as shown by the foundational acts of the new towns, such as the fortified hamlet of Pietrasanta, in which the Lucchesi in 1255 expressed their desire to impose the building of a church dedicated to their patron saint, Martin.¹⁸ And again in the case of Lucca, the model of *dominatrix* was promoted in the *contado* already from the *Duecento*, underlining the military superiority of the dominant city over both the newly constructed and the older cities, and also over rogue lords. Thus, the dominant city discouraged any subversive actions against its authority, even if in practice the territorial lay *signorie* of what were known as Cattani and Lambardi, present mainly in Versilia and in Garfagnana, were not strong enough to propose themselves as alternatives to the republic of Lucca. These noble families of modest importance which dominated one or more castles or villages, parts of castles, or groups of men, were not ever deprived of the privileges they had over the territories they controlled nor of their authority over its population: Lucca was their *dominatrix* to which they must guarantee their loyalty in the case of military conflict. This role was aided by the fact that Lucca was one of the most important urban centres of European pilgrimage because it safeguarded the Holy Face in the Cathedral of Saint Martin.¹⁹ Between the end of

seated on a throne with a scroll that reads 'Infrascripte glorie civitatis memento Senensis; ut de bono in melius semper suscipias incrementum': cited in Cammarosano, 'Siena dalla solidarietà imperiale al guelfismo', p. 458.

¹⁶ In the course of the *Duecento*, Siena conducted an autonomous policy of expansion, maintaining close ties with the Ghibelline world of Tuscany and with representatives of imperial authority: cf. Menzinger, *Giuristi e politica nei comuni di popolo*, pp. 34–38.

¹⁷ Moretti, 'Le fortificazioni'.

¹⁸ See Pirillo, *Creare comunità*, p. 62, and more generally on the foundation of communities in Tuscany, Pirillo, *Creare comunità*, pp. 53–79.

¹⁹ On the wooden crucifix, which according to legend was sculpted in the wood of a Lebanese cedar by Nicodemus, who wanted to preserve the true face of Christ, see *Lucca: il Volto Santo e la civiltà medievale*, pp. 407–97, and *Il Volto Santo: la Santa Croce di Lucca*. For information about the legend of the Holy Face (placed on a boat in Jaffa in the eighth century, the crucifix crossed the Mediterranean, arriving at the port of Luni; here the Lucchesi claimed it, but according to tradition it arrived in Lucca by divine will: the year was 782, under the

the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century, the Lucchesi emphasized their superiority over the families of the Corvaia and of the Vallecchia, holders of castles in the area of Versilia who had sworn their loyalty to both Lucca and Pisa. The Lucchesi justified their imperialistic actions over these noble families by affirming their desire to guarantee and maintain peace and freedom in their own territory, which they did by organizing demonstrative incursions; destroying, ransacking and burning castles; and then rapidly retreating, thereby leaving local relationships unaltered. In the same way Lucca related with the rural communes, not by elaborating any particular strategy but by continuously applying a model of action similar to that adopted against the noble lords. From the thirteenth century on, Lucca asked for formal recognition of civic power from the communities of the *contado* according to a fiscal system so well organized that it was able to draw income with regularity from all of its territory.²⁰

The Rhetoric of Libertas

In the Tuscan republics, the civic authorities were constantly presented to the city through sources as liberal, just, and impartial, and that meant capable of guaranteeing concord and *libertas* both in the city and in the territory. The Florentine republic, which never extended its power over Lucca and extended it over Siena only in the early modern age (1555), imposed obligations of subordination on the newly acquired cities in proposing itself as defender of the *libertates* of the new *universitas civium*. The levels of the political system were managed according to strictly hierarchical terms that found correspondence in the description the governor gave himself as dispenser of well-being for the territory he dominated. Respect for the superior on the part of the inferior was the founding ideological ingredient in the representation of the socio-political relationships between the dominant city and those it had subjected: the principle of authority thus became the ubiquitously visible foundation in the

bishopric of John I), see Baracchini and Filieri, *Il Volto Santo* and *Il Volto Santo di Lucca: storia e leggenda*. The crucifix was in reality a copy that dated from the twelfth to thirteenth century based on a Syrian model, as indicated by the Semitic features of the face, the dark colour of the skin, and the long-sleeved garment: cf. Kurz, *Der Volto Santo von Lucca*. On its fame and on how the relic achieved such great notoriety already by the eleventh century — there is testimony that the king of England, William II (1087–1100), usually made pledges on the Holy Face (*iurare per Sanctum Vultum de Luca*) — see Savigni, ‘Lucca e il Volto Santo nell’XI e XII secolo’; while on the civic value of the Holy Face of Lucca, I refer the reader to Benvenuti, “‘Santuario’: un percorso semantico”, pp. 35–42.

²⁰ Ferri, ‘Alcune considerazioni sulla vita civile e amministrativa’.

relationship between city and *contado*, which is based on the logic of obedience. In 1351, for example, the superiority of the Florentines was reconfirmed with the acquisition of sovereignty over Prato, where 'the rights of domination and of complete and utter dominion and full jurisdiction [...] over the territory and over all men from the land of Prato'²¹ were achieved. In the same year, the Florentines emphasized their own magnanimity when they returned to Pistoia several communities from their territory with 'benign and paternal love' (*benigno e paterno amore*).²² A few years later, in 1378, the Florentine vicar reminded the inhabitants of San Miniato 'of the jurisdiction, dominance, power, will, and obedience of the people and commune of Florence'.²³ And again in 1401 there is testimony that in the civic councils of Florence the inhabitants of Pistoia were reminded to consider 'our duty and honour of domination',²⁴ thus hoping that the same Pistoiesi, according to a clear and precise logic of obedience, 'will kindly wish to acknowledge our superiority'.²⁵ In the same way, the minutes from a Florentine council meeting of 1418 confirm that 'those who are governed should respect [the decisions] of the governors'.²⁶

Florence utilized the theme of political *libertas* to legitimize itself in its territory. It compared its own government to a perfect political system whose sovereignty cannot be broken by any externally superior factor, a political system capable of guaranteeing freedom to all those communities that recognized it as dominant.²⁷ The Florentine republican model was therefore based on the idea of the preservation of political *libertas*, a stratagem that Alison Brown has rightly compared to the one utilized by Caesar Augustus in the Roman impe-

²¹ 'I diritti del dominio e del mero e misto imperio e la giurisdizione piena [...] sul territorio e sugli uomini della terra di Prato': quoted in Pampaloni, 'L'autonomia pratese sotto Firenze (1351–1500)', p. 740. The loss of power removed political autonomy from the people of Prato: cf. Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 239–41.

²² Quoted in Chittolini, *La formazione dello Stato regionale*, p. 296, and in Collodo, 'Governanti e governati', p. 104.

²³ 'A iurisdictione, dominio, potestate, voluntate et obedientia populi et communis Florentie': quoted in Salvestrini, 'San Miniato al Tedesco', pp. 536–37.

²⁴ 'Nostre dominationis debitum et honorem': *Le 'consulte e pratiche' della repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Conti, p. 71.

²⁵ 'Benigne velint agnoscere nostram superioritatem': *Le 'consulte e pratiche' della repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Conti, p. 236.

²⁶ 'Coloro che sono governati dovrebbero rispettare [le decisioni] dei governanti': quoted in Brucker, *Dal Comune alla Signoria*, p. 472.

²⁷ Rubinstein, 'Florentina Libertas'. On this subject, see also Rubinstein, 'Le origini medevali del pensiero repubblicano'.

rial age.²⁸ It is a model that in theory is capable of assuring the co-existence of a plurality of diverse institutions in the same political space. This model was promoted by humanists such as Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444),²⁹ who on 20 February 1409 sent a letter to Niccolò Niccoli in which he defined the relationship between Florence and its territory as a ‘human congregation living in society under the same law’,³⁰ a congregation of souls that, as a provision of 27 July 1329 had already stated, was permeated by that ‘heavenly freedom’ (*libertas celeste*) which at the same time involved ‘the city, the county, and the district’ (*civitas, comitatus et districtus*).³¹

In full conformity with the dissolution of the old civic order typical of the late communal age, and therefore with the new political hierarchizing of urban centres that occurred on a large scale on the Italian peninsula, the term *libertas* began to be utilized by the dominant cities in order to emphasize the obligations of the subjected cities, with the goal of not appearing to be in contrast with the republicanism through which they reinforced their authority. The representation of good government and of obedient subjects thus expressed an ideology of control: it presumed in the rulers and in the forces associated with them — as co-rulers or as members of their administration — the awareness that the function of government could not be found exclusively in the exercise of force but must be drawn from the values included in the idea of common good, with the punishment being the loss of the consensus of the governed.³² The results

²⁸ Brown, ‘Il linguaggio dell’impero’, p. 256.

²⁹ On Leonardo Bruni, see Martines, *The Social World of Florentine Humanists*, pp. 117–23; and Viti, *Leonardo Bruni cancelliere della Repubblica di Firenze*.

³⁰ ‘congregatio hominum iure sociatorum et eisdem legibus viventium’: Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VIII*, ed. by Mehus, I, 78. The important element of those years was the establishment of territorial dominion, in the face of which the structure of the civic commune revealed itself to be by then inadequate, not to mention its ideological baggage. The legislative sources of the period tend to avoid the old circumscriptive names of *contado* and *distretto*, merging the definition into the unique term *territorium* to indicate the extension of unified and generally centralized jurisdiction. Bruni explains the difference between *urbs* and *civitas* in the aforementioned letter to Niccoli. *Civitas* for Bruni means not so much the moral unity of the citizenry as much as the external extension of the city’s jurisdiction, as in ancient times (‘modo iisdem legibus unoque statutis consilio vivant’), so that ‘licet urbs ipsa parva fuit, civitas nichilominus maxima et amplissima fuisse potuerit’: for these reasons *civitas* means for Bruni a ‘congregatio hominum iure sociatorum et eisdem legibus viventium’: Fubini, ‘La rivendicazione di Firenze’; on Bruni’s letter to Niccolò Niccoli, see p. 51.

³¹ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Provisioni, Registri*, 25, fol. 56r, 27 July 1329.

³² Collodo, ‘Governanti e governati’, p. 106.

of this promotional campaign, which centred around the propagation of the message of Florence as guarantor of the common good, were evoked even at the end of the *Quattrocento* by Girolamo Savonarola, who continuously compared Florence to ancient Rome in his *Treatise on the Constitution and the Government of Florence* (*Trattato sulla costituzione ed il governo di Firenze*): on the occasion of the loss of Pisa and of Montepulciano in 1494–95, the Dominican friar exhorts the Florentines to love the common good, sustaining that the Romans ‘greatly loved the common good of the city, [and that] augmenting the common good of the city [they increased] the empire for all the world’.³³

The term *libertas* was therefore also used in the conditions of dependence dictated by the systems of supremacy, just as in the situations of clear hierarchical subordination determined by the numerous civic territorial formations. Thus, Niccolò Machiavelli clearly identifies the problem in his *Florentine Histories* (*Istorie fiorentine*) when he writes that since the years following the expulsion of Walter of Brienne — the *signoria* of the duke of Athens was suppressed on 26 July 1343³⁴ — the Florentine republic was committed to perfecting a system of political propaganda for which ‘all lands subject to the Florentines [had to return] to their state of freedom’.³⁵ After the long selection process that would conclude at the beginning of the fifteenth century with the incorporation of the satellite cities into the regional territory, the term *libertas* was nothing other than a synonym for the privileges granted to them after the loss of full jurisdiction.³⁶ In fact, during the course of the *Quattrocento* Florence managed its territory utilizing the Eight Guardians on Security (*Otto di guardia*), the police agency created following the Ciompi revolt of 1378 charged with preventing possible subversions but also with giving orders to the *podestà* and to the captains: in addition to monitoring social deviance and political dissidence, the progressive centralization towards Florence is perceptible by

³³ ‘Oltre di questo, essendo concordi ed amandosi insieme, Dio remunererà questa loro benivolenza, dando loro perfetto governo, e quello augmentando: e questo è ancora una delle ragioni che Dio dette tanto imperio alli Romani, perché si amavano insieme, e stavano in concordia nel principio’: Savonarola, *Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*, bk III, chap. 1, p. 45.

³⁴ ‘Questa cacciata fu a dì 26 di Luglio 1343 il dì di S. Anna, e però insino a oggidì se ne corre il palio, e traesi fuori tutte le insegne dell’arti in tal dì, per commemorazione di detta cacciata’: Rinuccini, *Ricordi storici dal 1282 al 1460*, ed. by Aiazzi, p. xxvii.

³⁵ ‘Tutte le terre sottoposte ai Fiorentini [dovevano tornare] nella loro libertà’: Machiavelli, ‘*Istorie fiorentine*’, ed. by Martelli, bk II, chap. 38, p. 687.

³⁶ Collodo, ‘Governanti e governati’, p. 86.

examining how this magistracy progressively limits the power of local judges in matters of *lèse-majesté* and treason towards the state.³⁷

This climate of superiority over the subjected communities was in any case already declared at the time of the drafting of the statute of 1409. The Florentines were at this time effectively convinced of their domination over a region full of difficulties, as it was made up of villages, hamlets, and castles.³⁸ as well as of cities with a profound communal tradition, a variety that obligated them to confront 'the exceptionality of the moment and the novelty of the tasks facing them'.³⁹ When Pistoia was subjugated to Florence in 1401, for example, the Florentines promoted themselves as guardians of civic liberty in the face of the tyrannical pretenses of the Visconti, a perspective that in the words of Giannozzo Manetti was capably overturned, making it appear as if the concession of freedom and supremacy to the Florentines was a choice made by the Pistoiesi.⁴⁰ The conviction of controlling the entire region is a recurring *topos* in the Florentine sources. In the case of Siena, only a shrewd game of alliances would permit the city to maintain its independence until the mid-sixteenth century, as already in the *Quattrocento* Pope Pius II Piccolomini (1405–64) addressed the Sienese regarding Florence in this way: 'greedy for domination, wealthy in gold with its vast territory looming over your heads. The enemy is four miles away, always ready to cause your destruction'.⁴¹ With respect to the Florentine state, Siena had greater simplicity in terms of the institutional organization of its territory. All of the communities were, in fact, immediately subjected to Siena, which monitored the election of vicars, the *podestà*, and the captains, the magistracies that covered responsibilities and expenditures of the territory, and the commissions charged with resolving the most delicate ques-

³⁷ On the role of officials in the Florentine territory and on the centralization process advanced by Florence over its territory, see Ricciardelli, 'Giannozzo Manetti, un intellettuale al potere nell'Italia del Rinascimento', pp. 298–99, while on the crime of *lèse-majesté*, I refer the reader to Sbriccoli, *Crimen lesae Maiestatis*, pp. 202–04, and to Chiffolleau, 'Sur le crime de majesté medieval'.

³⁸ Tanzini, *Statuti e legislazione a Firenze*, pp. 103–98.

³⁹ Chittolini, 'La formazione dello stato regionale', p. 20.

⁴⁰ 'Pistoriensis liberam et interam Civitatis suae dominationem Florentino Populo concesserunt': Manetti, 'Chronicon pistoriense', p. 1073. On the conquest of Pistoia, see Milner, 'Capitoli e clienti a Pistoia', pp. 411–16.

⁴¹ 'Avida di dominio, ricca d'oro con il suo vasto territorio incombe sulle vostre teste. Il nemico è a quattro miglia, sempre pronto a procurare la vostra rovina': quoted in Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, p. 324.

tions, with reviewing accounts, and with ratifying local statutes. The expenditures for the costs of territorial management were decentralized through clearing accounts, which ended up not affecting the civic balance sheets, as they fell upon the communities as a whole; it was a system monitored externally (in the territory) by local officials and internally (in the city) by the officials of Siena's financial magistracy (*Biccherna*) and by the Regulators.⁴²

As in Florence, in Siena the advent of the regime of the *popolo* introduced forms of political propaganda which revolved around the diffusion of the internal structure of the city. The new protagonists of territorial expansion became the governments of the *popolo* guided by the merchant class, beginning with the regime known as the Nine (1287–1355). With the noble families excluded from government life, the Sienese commune strengthened around a regime at whose apex was a large, mercantile, and financially oriented oligarchy that gave origin to political communications through effective slogans intended to underline the good and peaceful civic state. The new defenders of the *popolo* and of the city definitively gave life to a system of values that led, at least formally, to the progressive reduction of the use of arms and to the promotion of a political program no longer based on force, but instead based on concord, justice, and good government.⁴³ The consolidation of the territorial dominion went hand in hand with the consolidation of the social and political authority in the city, of the unrestricted group of families, and of individuals that made up the wealthiest and most opulent of the citizenry, which was largely involved in commercial activity, in the banking industry, and in the textile industry (in the roughly seventy years of the authority of the Nine, between two and three thousand citizens of Siena participated in governing).⁴⁴ In this way, the government of the Nine promoted a program that aimed not only to unite the city internally but also to break the initiatives for independence of the noble families, which, above all from the second half of the *Trecento* forward, supported the formation of independent *signorie* revolving around their lands and small

⁴² Zorzi, 'Politica e istituzioni in Toscana', p. 31.

⁴³ On how the city of Siena, together with the ascent of the government of the *popolo*, underwent a radical change of political alliance and of orientation in foreign policy — that is, on how the city passed from a substantial solidarity with the emperor (who had encouraged Sienese hostility towards Florence) to the opposite end of the spectrum (and that is to the support of the Guelph alliance driven by Florence in Tuscany) — see Cammarosano, 'Siena dalla solidarietà imperiale al guelfismo'. On the relationship between civic concord and justice, see Norman, "Love Justice, You Who Judge the Earth", pp. 156–57.

⁴⁴ Ascheri, 'La Siena del "Buon Governo" (1287–1355)'; Bowsky, 'Medieval Citizenship'.

fortresses in the areas of the Val d'Orcia, Val d'Ombone, and the Maremma.⁴⁵ And even when in the course of the fifteenth century there began a period of crisis in the context of political territory (with seignorial temptations in the city), the Sienese republic was able to return important communities — such as Cinigiano, Batignano, Boccheggiano (1404), Sasso d'Ombone and Talamone (1411), and Piancastagnaio (1415) — to its own jurisdiction through the use of diplomacy. An example of the diplomatic abilities of the Sienese is visible in the war Siena fought with the noble family of the Salimbeni, which still in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was at the head of a truly independent state in the southern part of the Sienese district. This noble house, which controlled the Cassia Road and thus communication with Rome, represented a thorn in the side of the Sienese republic until the council of the *popolo* decided to give representation to the Salimbeni clan in the civic consistory in 1419, on the condition that their lands and strongholds submitted to the jurisdiction of the commune.⁴⁶ And even in the smallest state of Lucca, the expansionist policy in the territory began in the communal age and was consolidated beginning in the year 1369 (when Lucca regained its independence from Pisa) through a system of political propaganda aimed at spreading the idea among the inhabitants of the city and the territory of taking part in a state that was free, peaceful, and guided by its *popolo*.⁴⁷

In the same way, Florence developed a language in this period that defined and legitimized it as a territorial power. The early thirteenth century statutes required, for example, that the major civic magistracies were appointed over both the city and the territory: thus, the Captain of the *popolo* was elected in Florence to carry out the functions of 'conservator pacis civitatis et districtus',⁴⁸ while the *podestà* complied with his office as defender of the inhabitants of the city and of the district along with their property.⁴⁹ However, Niccolò

⁴⁵ Ginatempo, 'Motivazioni ideali e coscienza'; Ascheri and Ciampoli, *Siena e il suo territorio nel Rinascimento*.

⁴⁶ 'Terre et castella Chochi Cionis de Salimbenibus et eius cassara et futilizia deveniant in manibus et in fortiam communis Senarum': Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Concistoro, Deliberazioni*, 318, fols 15^r–15^v, 26 January 1419; Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Consiglio Generale, Deliberazioni*, 207, fols 144^r–144^v, 27 January 1419. On this, see Isaacs, 'Magnati, comuni e stato a Siena nel Trecento', pp. 89–90.

⁴⁷ Manselli, *La Repubblica di Lucca*, pp. 69–72. On the idea of liberty in the Italian republics, see Skinner, *Virtù rinascimentali*, pp. 123–53.

⁴⁸ *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Caggese and others, 1: *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo*, bk I, chap. 1, p. 7.

⁴⁹ 'Homines et personas civitatis et districtus eiusdem et eorum bona, et res et iura rationes

Machiavelli writes that the imperial abilities of the Florentines were less 'perfect' than those, for example, of the Venetians when considering that

in certain little islands at the extremity of the Adriatic Sea, in order to escape the wars which, with the decline of the Roman Empire, were renewed every day by the arrival of new hordes of Barbarians, they began amongst themselves, without any recognized leader to guide them, to live together under the laws which they thought best suited to maintain them.⁵⁰

The prospects of Florentine power began to turn their attention systematically from the city to the surrounding areas in the course of the *Trecento*, as clearly demonstrated by a document from 1378: in the meeting of 1 September of that year, in fact, the *auctoritas* of the city, transferred to the *consilia* of the commune, is defined as *universalis*, thus emphasizing that the territory was considered by the Florentines as being under the 'power, jurisdiction, and authority of the people and the commune of Florence' ('potestas, arbitrium, et imperium populi et comunis Florentie').⁵¹

In 1291 the statute of the Nine was committed to extending, expanding, and preserving the city of Siena and its territory.⁵² In the course of the fourteenth century, Siena also utilized communicative techniques oriented towards the achievement of internal political cohesion and towards the centralization of the city's control over the territory through the progressive exclusion of magnate families.⁵³ Thus, the Nine's commissioning of Simone Martini to paint the fresco entitled *Guidoriccio da Fogliano at the Siege of Montemassi* in the town hall responded to nothing other than the need by the mercantile government

Communis Florentie': *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. by Caggese and others, II: *Statuto del Podestà dell'anno 1325*, bk I, chap. 1, pp. 7–8.

⁵⁰ 'In certe isolette che erano nella punta del mare Adriatico, per fuggire quelle guerre che ogni dì per lo avvenimento di nuovi barbari, dopo la declinazione dello Imperio romano nascevano in Italia, cominciarono infra loro, senza altro principe particolare che gli ordinasse, a vivere sotto quelle leggi che parevano loro più atte a mantenerli': Machiavelli, 'Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio', ed. by Martelli, bk I, chap. 1, p. 77.

⁵¹ Trexler, 'Il parlamento fiorentino del 1° settembre 1378', p. 459.

⁵² 'Ampliare et augere civitatem et iurisdictionem Senarum tam in marittima quam in montana': quoted in De Castris, *Simone Martini*, p. 265; cf. also the other archival quotations on the same topic in De Castris, *Simone Martini* (p. 295, n. 73).

⁵³ Bosky, *Un comune italiano nel Medioevo*, pp. 359–405. For the reconstruction of the political history of Siena, see Luzzati, *Firenze e la Toscana nel Medioevo*, pp. 128–39, to which must be added at least Ascheri, *Siena nel Rinascimento*; and Ascheri, *Il Rinascimento a Siena (1355–1555)*.

to affirm and strengthen the Sienese political model over the territory.⁵⁴ The desire to establish Sienese political authority is evident at the right extremity of the painting, where the Nine envision the representation of the Sienese encampment in which the flags representing the emblems of the commune, the *popolo*, and the various captains are waving. The army next to the castle of Montemassi puts the flag of Siena in the forefront together with the insignias of the leader of the expedition, Guidoriccio da Fogliano.⁵⁵ The Nine decided that the political capabilities of the great mercantile regime would be evoked in one of the most important rooms of the town hall. The fresco was a true manifesto of political propaganda that legitimized the elites in power to manage the governmental dynamics of the city and its territory. The civic government, underlining its endeavours in the territory, put its own prosperity on display. It was the Sienese citizenry — and above all the politicians who were accommodated in those rooms — that was forced to remember the political greatness of the Nine, representatives of a government that controlled its own territory, at least in words. On the contrary, the main problem of the Tuscan territory, and all that of Siena, was in fact explained by Giovanni Villani to his readers. Villani described it in its entirety as ‘all fortified with castles and occupied by nobles and the powerful who do not obey the city’.⁵⁶ The Sienese affirmed their power over the territory in making the payment available to Simone Martini for ‘the painting he did of Montemassi and Sassoforte in the town hall’.⁵⁷ Martini was sent for a week into the areas of Arcidosso, Castel del Piano, and Scansano so that he could memorize several features of the Sienese territory ‘in the service of the Commune with a horse and a foot soldier’.⁵⁸ That the Sienese territory was problematic is underlined exactly by the difficulty and by the large amount of time necessary for retaking the castle of Montemassi, which rebelled in 1328 against the dominant city with the support of Castruccio Castracani

⁵⁴ Bellosi, ‘Castrum pingatur in palatio’, p. 19. For a discussion on this subject, see Ragionieri, *Simone o non Simone*; Martindale, ‘The Problem of “Guidoriccio”’.

⁵⁵ Bowsky, *Un comune italiano nel Medioevo*, pp. 85–97.

⁵⁶ ‘Tutto incastellato e occupato da nobili e possenti che non obbedieno la città’: Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk IV, chap. 3.

⁵⁷ ‘La dipintura che fece di Monte Massi et Sassoforte nel palacço del Comune’: quoted in Frugoni, *Una lontana città*, p. 98, and De Castris, *Simone Martini*, p. 268.

⁵⁸ ‘In servizio del Chomune chon uno chavallo et uno fante a pie’: Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Biccherna*, 397, fols. 121r–121v, quoted in *Documenti per la storia dell’arte senese*, ed. by Milanese, I: *secoli XIII–XIV*, 217; and in Bacci, *Fonti e commenti per la storia dell’arte senese*, p. 160. On the realism practised by Simone Martini in his reproduction of Montemassi, see Moretti, ‘Simone Martini a Montemassi’.

degli Antelminelli. There are also testimonies in contemporary chronicles which recount that during the siege there even grew a vineyard, faithfully represented in Simone Martini's fresco: in this regard Agnolo di Tura del Grasso underlines the difficulties that the Sienese found in achieving this conquest, writing that 'this enemy at Montemassi stayed there for so long that some from the enemy planted a large vineyard in the field and they drank the wine from that vineyard'.⁵⁹ That the relationship between the city and its territory were an important issue for the government of the Nine is demonstrated by the drafting of what are known as the *Tablets of Possessions* (*Tavole delle Possessioni*), a descriptive land registry of all the territory compiled between 1316 and 1320 for the purpose of gathering information in order to monitor castles, strongholds, and the noble rights of the important families present in the Sienese *contado*.⁶⁰ That the noble families represented a problem for the freedom that was praised through propaganda is evident in that the Nine were substituted in the city by the Twelve (1355–68), an undoubtedly weaker regime which endured a series of insurrections and rebellion attempts in the *contado* by communities such as Massa Marittima, Montepulciano, Monterotondo, and Grosseto. The

⁵⁹ 'La detta oste a Montemassi vi stè gran tempo in modo che quelli dell'oste posero una grande vigna in campo ed ebero del vino di quella vigna in campo': Agnolo di Tura del Grasso, 'Cronica senese', ed. by Lisini and Iacometti, p. 464. On the siege of Montemassi of 1328 I refer the reader also to Giovanni Villani's description: 'Nel detto anno, a dì X d'aprile, Castruccio prima fatto rubellare, e poi il fece fornire, Montemassi in Maremma, il quale certi gentili uomini marenmani, che v'aveano ragione, col favore di Castruccio l'aveano rubellato a dispetto de' Sanesi che v'erano ad oste, e con battifolle, e' Fiorentini vi mandarono in loro soccorso CCL cavalieri, ma giunsono tardi, sì che non poterono riparare a la forza della cavalleria di Castruccio. Per la qual cosa i Sanesi mandarono ambasciadori a Pisa a Castruccio, e dimandargli che non si travagliasse contro a'lloro. Castruccio per ischernie de' Sanesi non fece loro null'altra risposta, se non per una lettera bianca, ch'altro non dicea se non: "Levate via chelchello", in sanese, cioè il battifolle; onde i Sanesi forte ingrecao, e rinforzarvi l'assedio coll'aiuto de' Fiorentini, che vi mandarono CCCL cavalieri, e per patti ebbono il detto Montemassi a dì [...] d'agosto MCCCXXVIII': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk XI, chap. 81.

⁶⁰ On the *Tavola delle Possessioni*, see Farinelli and Giorgi, 'La "Tavola delle Possessioni"'. It is an 'archive group made up of 96 preparatory boards and of about 150 lists of names of landowners. The boards were compiled by specialized personnel: *mensuratores* and notaries inspected every piece of land in order to make an accurate appraisal (*stima*). Each plot was described in detail: the name of the owner and the town of origin were indicated; the land was then described with its location; the owners of adjoining land, the type of cultivation, the size and dimensions (in *staiori* and in *tavole*), and, in the end, the appraisals were all noted. The information was then recorded in the *Tablet*, grouping together the property of each landowner, even if dispersed in different communities'; Farinelli and Giorgi, 'La "Tavola delle Possessioni"', p. 213. On the political importance of this source, see Giorgi, 'Il conflitto magnati/popolani nelle campagne'.

chronicler Donato di Neri explains that such attempts at rebellion were fuelled by the turbulence of the important families, as also demonstrated by the conflicts which occur in the Val d'Orcia, where the rivalries between the Salimbeni and Tolomei clans were evident.⁶¹

In Lucca, as well, the period of authority and prosperity began in the *Duecento* thanks to both the political ability of the commune in extending its control over neighbouring territories and to the audacity of local businessmen, whose profile was becoming increasingly international in the exploitation of the growing luxury market.⁶² The theme of *libertas* was utilized in the republic of Lucca above all to defend the city from possible external lordships. From the central decades of the fourteenth century, in fact, Lucca was subjugated by Gherardo Spinola and then by Giovanni di Boemia (from 1331 to 1333), by the Rossi family of Parma (until 1335), by Mastino della Scala (until 1342), and by Pisa (until 1369). It was these submissions that favoured the perfecting of a system of political propaganda that would find its natural fulcrum in the term *libertas*. At the centre of the political ability of the commune, in fact, there was a program of propaganda that constantly transmitted the idea of civic *libertas* in the city and in the territory, a theme which involved the concept of the defence of the city and that would be strengthened, especially from 1369 onward.⁶³ The necessity of recovering political freedom was strengthened in Lucca thanks to the Pisan domination, as emphasized by the chronicler and short-story writer Giovanni Sercambi, who, in reference to the years between 1342 and 1369, recounts how difficult the acceptance of their submission to the Pisans was for the Lucchesi, because the former dictated that the elections of the Elders (*Anziani*) always took place 'with the sounds of instruments, in the presence of all the people of Pisa and a large part of the community of Lucca'.⁶⁴ And again the chronicler from Lucca describes with irony and reactionary spirit the imposition of the seignorial parsonage that the *doge* of Pisa Giovanni dell'Agnello, *signore* of Lucca from 1364 to 1368, entrusted to his two sons, 'who had not yet reached the age of 7 years',⁶⁵ underlining that

⁶¹ Donato di Neri, *Cronaca senese*, ed. by Lisini and Iacometti, pp. 581–82, 590–92, 615 and 617–18; On this, see Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, p. 332.

⁶² Molà, *La comunità dei lucchesi a Venezia*.

⁶³ Meek, *Lucca, 1369–1400*, pp. 19–30.

⁶⁴ 'Con suoni di stromenti, in presentia di tucto il populo di Pisa e gram parte della comunità di Lucchà': Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 132.

⁶⁵ 'Li quali non aveano ancora VII anni': Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 131.

such an act and such authority given to these boys was displeasing to many, nonetheless the best thing for all was to be content. And if anyone were to have contradicted them, he, whoever he was, would have been killed, so therefore keeping silent was necessary.⁶⁶

Just a few years after the concession of freedom by Charles IV, the government and the clergy of Lucca dedicated the altar consecrated to the saints Jason, Maurus, and Ilaria in the cathedral of Saint Martin to the cult of *Libertas* in Lucca, an altar, exactly, ‘quod appellatur altare libertatis’.⁶⁷ The idea of Lucca as a free city extended to the threshold of the early modern age considering that Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) in his day underlines how the term *libertas* was very visible to all because it was ‘written on the towers of the city [...] in big letters’.⁶⁸

Submission and Pacification

The concern of the dominant cities for public order is a determining element both in the phase of consolidation of territorial expansion and in the phase of fortifying the management of the subjected communities. The intervention of the dominant city of Florence was characterized by a policy between repression and appeasement: in addition to the diffusion of the model of so-called *libertas* — a term that was not only directed at the newly conquered cities, given that it was also inserted in the propaganda against the Visconti and papal expansionism (during the War of the Eight Saints (1375–78), for example, the Florentines sent to the cities that rebelled against papal controlled ‘a flag, which was all red with letters across it, like those of Rome; but this flag said “Libertà”’⁶⁹) —, one of the most recurring themes of the Florentine expansionist propaganda was that of *pax florentina*. Completely recovered from classical antiquity, and more precisely from Augustan propaganda, the theme of the *pax*

⁶⁶ ‘Che a molti dispiacesse tale acto et tale signoria cenceduta a dicti fanciulli, non di meno convenne a ugnuno star contenti. E qual fusse stato quello che avesse contradicto, sare’ stato morto, sichè il tacere fu di necessità’: Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 132.

⁶⁷ Seidel and Silva, *Potere delle immagini*, p. 70. On the five altarpieces commissioned to Paoluccio di Lazzarino for the altar in question, see Concioni, Ferri, and Ghilarducci, *Arte e pittura nel medioevo lucchese*, p. 334.

⁶⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. by Gaskin, cap. XXI, p. 143.

⁶⁹ ‘Una bandiera, la quale era tutta rossa con lettere a traverso, come quelle di Roma; ma questa bandiera dicea ‘Libertà’: Stefani, *Cronica fiorentina*, ed. by Rodolico, rub. 753, pp. 293–94.

florentina was related to the idea of the critical role of the republic as bearer of peace and conciliation in the subjugated communities lacerated by violent differences, just as in the Augustan age.⁷⁰ The cultural legitimization of subjected cities by the dominant ones occurred through justifications of aggregation, which very often had at their centre the substitution of the pre-existing civic cults with those of the dominant city. Florence, for example, required that all the dominated localities offered large candles to St John the Baptist on 24 June of every year, according to an act of submission that cancelled out the very advantages which Florence sometimes agreed to with the satellite cities: in some cases, in fact, the latter could even exercise their own jurisdictional functions by drafting their own statutes.⁷¹

It is from this perspective that the formulas adopted in the reforms ordered by Florence in relation to the annexation of the cities of the Valdinievole, which took place in the decade between 1329 and 1339, are interpreted. Replacing the authority that Lucca had in this region for centuries in 1329, the republic of Florence sanctioned the obligations and privileges between the two parties, highlighting its own diplomatic abilities and not its determination to obtain the submission of the newly subjected communities. The study of the customary documentation underlines and reveals how all of the new communities, in accordance with the Florentines, had voluntarily and proudly become part of the domain of the Fleur-de-Lis, as demonstrated by the cases of Montecatini, Monsummano, Montevettolini, Buggiano, Pescia, Massa, Cozzile, and Uzzano.⁷² The new *districtuales florentini*, as the inhabitants of the subjected communities were called, agreed with the dominant city on the right to nominate their own *podestà*, but the ‘merum et mixtum imperium’, according to which their own communities were regulated, did not exempt them from the act of submission *par excellence*, that of participating in the celebrations for the Feast of the Florentine patron saint, John the Baptist.⁷³ And moreover, in 1351

⁷⁰ The system of values created by Augustus Caesar based on rhetoric, art, and architecture becomes the instrument through which the territory controlled by Rome starts a process of progressive cultural unification: Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*.

⁷¹ On the Feast Day of Saint John, see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 215–24; and Ventrone, ‘La festa di San Giovanni’, pp. 50–52. On the definitive imposition of Saint John the Baptist on the subjected communities in the age of the Grand Duchy, see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 259–60.

⁷² ‘Ex certa scientia et non per errorem et ipsorum spontanea voluntate subicierunt, supposuerunt et submisserunt communi et populo Florentie’: quoted in Francesconi, ‘Le comunità della Valdinievole’, p. 85.

⁷³ Francesconi, ‘Le comunità della Valdinievole’, pp. 85–86.

the Florentines began to impose on the people of Prato the harmonious civic program of Florentine Marian cults that progressively replaced the civic cult of the Girdle of Thomas.⁷⁴

The annexation of San Gimignano in 1353 can be seen in this way, as an occasion in which the inhabitants of San Gimignano 'were made citizens of Florence [and] in the registries of the Commune were noted, the cautions and the submissions stated',⁷⁵ and in which the Florentines proposed themselves as peacemakers for the factional struggles and healers for the local differences.⁷⁶ And again the formalization of supremacy over Volterra in 1361 can be seen from this perspective, as an occasion for which the Florentines promoted a program of political propaganda in which the citizens of the new urban centre must have been convinced of having acquired a condition of greater political stability with the annexation by Florence.⁷⁷ A theme indissolubly tied to that of the *pax florentina* is *superioritas*, based on the inevitable recognition by the subjected communities of the political superiority of the Florentine dominators, which rendered them convincing and valuable healers of the internal rifts. The ability of the Florentines to resolve the internal disputes of the subjected cities is perfectly summarized in the prologue of the Florentine statute of 1409 where reference is made to the *potentia* of the republic, a pacifying force that the writers of the early fourteenth century civic constitution intended to be projected over its dominion and therefore over the territory and over the subjugated cities.⁷⁸ The Florentines attributed to themselves, then, the role of standard-bearer for civil concord and the role of champion against the tyranny that could originate from the victory of one of the families that participated in the factional struggles or of conquerors who, as Matteo Villani underlines in relation to the same taking of Volterra, defined those who have been conquered as 'friends of the Commune of Florence'.⁷⁹

The ideological value of the *civitas* remained the primary reference for the elites of the dominant cities who governed the entities of the regional states without abandoning their own civic future. The crisis of identity and political

⁷⁴ Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, p. 240.

⁷⁵ 'Furono fatti cittadini di Firenze [e] nei registri del Comune furono notate le cautele e le sommissioni dette': Matteo Villani, *Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk III, chap. 73.

⁷⁶ Salvestrini, 'San Miniato al Tedesco', p. 540.

⁷⁷ Fabbri, 'Il patriziato fiorentino e il dominio su Volterra'.

⁷⁸ Tanzini, *Statuti e legislazione a Firenze*, p. 55.

⁷⁹ 'Li amici del Comune di Firenze': Matteo Villani, *Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk x, chap. 67.

conscience brought about by the devitalization of the older values that characterized the communal civilizations before their assimilation into the dominant cities reveals how the attempts at integration were nothing other than ulterior forms of subordination.⁸⁰ The coercive provisions were regularly accompanied by a program of pacification of the internal conflicts of the subjected communities. From the middle of the *Trecento* forward there is testimony of this policy in the explicit mandates sent to the Florentine officials in its domain as well as in the observations reported by several of them in their own notes on its outcomes. It was, then, a program of coercion and of pacification that was systematically applied by the Florentines, as happened with the revolt orchestrated by Ricciardo Cancellieri in the area of Pistoia in 1401–03 and with the uprisings and conspiracies that exploded in all of the Florentine territory in 1429, during the adventurous war that Florence conducted against Lucca.⁸¹ In the same way, this tactic was applied by the Florentines in Volterra, in Arezzo, along the border with Siena, in the Pisan *contado* and in the lands contiguous with Lucca,⁸² and in Pisa in 1432.⁸³ An example of this is represented by the case of Francesco di Tommaso di Giovanni, captain of Cortona in 1444, who notes in his personal memories that he also earned honour because he contributed to the ‘renewed concord and appeasement’ (*‘concordargli et pacificarsi infra loro’*) of numerous citizens in conflict.⁸⁴ And furthermore, it is known how the conduct of the Florentine mediators sent to Pistoia in 1455 and in the years that follow was aimed at attempting to sedate the endemic partisan impulse of the Pistoiesi:⁸⁵ the case of Neri Capponi is significant in this sense as he was the foreign Florentine official who, for having contributed to the appeasement between the sides in the city of Pistoia, received from the commune the honorary title of ‘protector and father of the city of Pistoia’ (*‘protector et pater civitatis Pistorii’*) in 1457.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ ‘Tutte le cittadinanze erano poi animate da un forte patriottismo locale, che si alimenta di memorie — vere o presunte — di età romana o più recente, di culti patronali, di odio, di risentimento o di desiderio di vendetta verso le città vicine’: Cherubini, ‘La Toscana di fronte all’Italia e all’Europa’, p. 177.

⁸¹ Herlihy, *Pistoia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento*, pp. 230–31.

⁸² Brucker, *Dal Comune alla Signoria*, pp. 574–76.

⁸³ Petralia, “Crisi” ed emigrazione dei ceti eminenti a Pisa, pp. 305–06.

⁸⁴ Zorzi, ‘Giusdicenti e operatori di giustizia nello Stato territoriale fiorentino’, pp. 536–37.

⁸⁵ Connell, ‘Clientelismo e stato territoriale’, p. 531.

⁸⁶ Connell, ‘Clientelismo e stato territoriale’, p. 537.

When in 1206 Siena wanted to legitimize its supremacy over several castles up, until then in the hands of lords from the Maremma, the acts of submission were entrusted to Bartolomeo di Rainaldino, the *podestà* of the city who covered an important role in the transition, accompanied by another member from the Sienese *milites* class, Giacomo di Ildebrandino Giuseppe.⁸⁷ However, Charles of Anjou, when he entered Lucca, adopted clearly Guelph positions in supporting the Church and establishing *ecclesiastica libertas*, thereby implying that until then this form of liberty had been lacking in Lucca.⁸⁸ And again in Lucca, after its liberation from Pisan domination in 1369, when the social tensions and the subterranean rivalries that broke out between the Forteguerra and the Guinigi families leading to the armed conflict of 1392 had cleared the way for the *signoria* of the Guinigi — in particular for Paolo Guinigi⁸⁹ — the new civic lord was propagandistically imposed on the citizenry as a political figure capable of dispensing social peace and tranquillity to both the city and its territory.⁹⁰ The *signore* was then perceived as capable of resolving the misunderstandings and the rivalries that weakened the civic peace. Thus, in relation to the facts that followed the events of the summer of 1391, and, that is, at the decisive moment of the rivalry between the Forteguerra and Guinigi families, Giovanni Sercambi criticized his city because it had fallen into an unacceptable state of social abandon, becoming ‘worse than the woods’ because of the internal feuding.⁹¹ With the republican freedom restored in Lucca, this perspective was once again overturned. The *signore* was no longer a dispenser of social tranquillity, considering what happens following the removal of his lordship during the night between the fourteenth and 15 August in 1430: on 16 August, in fact, the newly opened civic councils underlined the longed for return of the liberty that the very Guinigi family, at one time dispenser of peace and stability, negated, thereby emphasizing how Lucca and its territory were once again joined together ‘in a state of peace and sweet liberty’.⁹²

The testimonies of Florentine expansionism in the region are numerous. And the meetings (*colloqui*) of Lucca, the equivalent of the Florentine council

⁸⁷ Cherubini, *Città comunali di Toscana*, pp. 312–13.

⁸⁸ Manselli, *La Repubblica di Lucca*, p. 47.

⁸⁹ Lazzareschi, ‘Il tesoro di Paolo Guinigi’, and Mancini, *Storia di Lucca*, pp. 177–97.

⁹⁰ Meek, *Lucca, 1369–1400*, pp. 237–68.

⁹¹ ‘era divenuta Luccha peggio ch’um bosco’: Sercambi, *Le Croniche*, ed. by Bongi, I, 274.

⁹² ‘Ad statum pacificum dulcissimae libertatis [...]’: Archivio di Stato di Lucca, *Comune. Minute di Riformagioni*, 10, quoted in Polica, ‘Famiglie del ceto dirigente lucchese’, p. 355.

meetings (*consulte e pratiche*) — selected assemblies in which ‘esteemed’ citizens (*richiesti*) were asked to participate by the association of the Elders (*Anziani*) in varying numbers according to the occasion and the agenda to be discussed — reveal information in this regard, even if these concerns were never resolved openly. Lucca was located only about ten miles from the border in the Valdinievole, but the Florentines, who evaluated their ability to hold out during the long war of the 1430s, never considered compromising the fragile balance achieved with the Italian states of the *Quattrocento*. Hence, they did not ever initiate war with the two cities that remained independent of their dominion, Lucca and Siena.⁹³

Florence and Siena consistently achieved political consensus over their respective communities by activating a system of ritual forms whose complexity reveals an indisputable maturity. Lucca regularly defined its republican power in an anti-Florentine light, guiding its community towards the awareness of its own political role. The comparison between the republican systems had its logic: although in different ways, in all three forms of political persuasion were utilized and aimed towards the legitimization of authority and the achievement of political consensus. The authority defined and delimited the relationships and the hierarchies within the single communities, leading them towards a progressive growth of conscience regarding their political role. Thus, gestures, words, and rituals assumed a decisive importance in this race for power as codes of precise references to dispute or with which to identify. The analysis of these themes allows for the decodifying of the tools and the techniques of power which at the beginning of the *Cinquecento* Niccolò Machiavelli sustains as necessary in order to achieve consensus over the citizenry: referring to the *carnevale* of 1490, in which Lorenzo de’ Medici wrote the *Canzona di Bacco*, the chancellor of Florence underlines the great talents of the *Magnifico*, a generous patron, for knowing how to maintain ‘in these peaceful times, his native city in celebration; where often joys and representations of events and of ancient triumphs were on display; and his goal was to keep the city in abundant supply, the *popolo* united, and the nobility honoured’.⁹⁴

⁹³ On the safeguarding of Lucca’s autonomy, see Luzzati, ‘Politica di salvaguardia dell’autonomia lucchese’.

⁹⁴ ‘In questi tempi pacifici, sempre la patria sua in festa; dove spesso gioie e rappresentazioni di fatti e di trionfi antichi si vedevano; e il fine suo era tenere la città abbondante, unito il popolo, e la nobiltà onorata’: Machiavelli, ‘Istorie fiorentine’, ed. by Martelli, bk VIII, chap. 36, p. 843.

CONCLUSION

This book investigates the political space of Italian cities in the period between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The subjects of this study are the different forms of government, the problem of governability, the identification of the best form of government, the relationship between the governors and the governed, and the correlation of the theme of good government to the analysis of the common good. This work examines the language of politics understood principally as an instrument for the construction of the social identity of a community. This tool is reborn in the environment of the city-states of central and northern Italy when the governments, in the name of the common good, began to promote the drafting of civic statutes in order to disseminate law provisions with persuasive introductions and to favour the writing of prose chronicles whose underlying motivation is the praising of the city and its good government. The political arena became the testing grounds for new forms of communication, which were increasingly in demand in the same proportion as the need to manage public opinion, embroiled as it was among internal divisions and factional struggles. In the race for power, the written and spoken word played a crucially important role as a code of reference with which to identify or to contest.¹

¹ The theme of common good has entered into the agenda of scholars, as evidenced by the volume *Il bene comune: forme di governo e gerarchie sociali*, which sustains that *civitas* tends toward the common good when the political regime that facilitates it guarantees peace and security and achieves the natural happiness of man. From an opposing but convergent perspective, the work *Tiranni e tirannide nel Trecento italiano* reinterprets the theme of tyranny by putting into question the paradigm of the national pedagogy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries founded upon the valorization of the height of the epoch of communes in contrast with the decadence of the age of principalities.

The necessity of communication for the consolidation of acquired political power had its beginning in the experience of the consular commune and was strengthened in the course of the commune of the *podestà*, while the height of its development is found in the period in which the *popolo* — artisans, merchants, and small proprietors — took over the reins of local government. The new merchant classes began to be progressively inserted into the administrations of the civic communes because of the logic of division aimed at assigning them a fixed percentage of presences in public offices, while the civic trades began to leave their mark on the government structures to the point of imposing sets of rules that favoured the guilds and drew their constitutional base from the structure of these same associations between workers. The variety of the constituent base of the *popolo* influenced the objectives and the strategies of the popular movement itself and contributed in placing the protection of civic concord at the centre of the political program in an attempt to surpass the model of hegemonic and coercive power that up to that moment had been the prerogative of the old ruling classes, for decades in the hands of families of noble extraction.

The political communication of the governments of the *popolo* used a language that had as its principal characteristic the total absence of aggression in the context of a program through which the new ruling classes were presented as guarantors of moderation and impartial to the desires of factional or individual interests. In this perspective, reassuring terminology was adopted with the goal of associating the rulers with wisdom and with the protection of the common good, as the names that define them reveal: Elders (*Anziani*), Defenders (*Difensori*), Priors of the Guilds (*Priori delle Arti*), or, even more clearly, as in the case of Pistoia, Wisemen (*Posati*).² The determination in characterizing these government figures as providential is verified by the chroniclers, who operated in the circles of the governments of the *popolo*, which often described themselves utilizing evangelical passages — sometimes even non-existing ones — through which the greatness of their native cities was justified: an example of this is seen in the chronicles of Giovanni Villani in which, in his *Nuova Cronica*, he explains the etymological origin of the executive body of Florence, underlining that ‘the name priors of the guilds, which means those

² Barbi, ‘Prefazione’, p. lxvi. In the months following the uprisings of March to April of 1296, the governors of Pistoia were defined as ‘good and great citizens of the people’ (*buoni e grandi cittadini di popolo*), always ready to meet ‘with the will to find a remedy so that the city and its citizenry don’t fall into complete ruin’ (*per volere ponere rimedio a ciò che la città e’ cittadini non corressono in istruzione del tutto*): ‘Storie pistoresi’, ed. by Barbi, rub. 7, p. 15.

elected above the other citizens, comes from the Gospel where Christ said to the disciples: you are the priors.³

In the period between the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, when the majority of governments of the *popolo* that had established themselves in the cities of northern and central Italy fell, the *signorie* that substituted them promoted the writing of political treatises highlighting the social advantages resulting from the achievement of order and peace that only the *signori* were able to guarantee. With the exception of Florence, Siena, Venice, Lucca, and Genoa, which continued to be governed by regimes that were republican in nature, the slogan *libertas* that had distinguished the communal governments from their birth was substituted by slogans whose objective was the achievement of order and peace. While a part of the communal society extended the participation of the *popolo* to the legislative and executive powers, another part, with the rise of the *signorie*, attempted to respond to the endemic conflict among rival factions.⁴

The passage from governments of the *popolo* to the *signorie* placed two political models in direct comparison in the eyes of contemporary observers. All those who in the course of the late communal age engaged in the analysis of the comparison between republican and seignorial systems identified freedom in the former, peace in the latter. Aristotle is the author who more than anyone else stimulated dialogue with his *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, respectively translated into Latin by Robert Grosseteste around the year 1240 and by William of Moerbeke about twenty years later. In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, the Greek philosopher analyzes the various political constitutions, sustaining that the monarchy, given the inevitable instability of the constitutional systems, is the best form of government: this type of governmental structure, however, can degenerate into tyranny and become even worse than democracy, which is a perversion of the republican forms of government. The central position held by Aristotle in the minds of intellectuals of the late communal age is reinforced by the re-reading of *Politics*, a work in which the Greek philosopher continues to advocate the cause of the monarchy as the best form of government as long as it does not degenerate into tyranny, the worst of the political expressions produced by mankind because of its capacity to exercise 'despotic power on the

³ 'Nome priori dell'arti viene a dire i primi eletti sopra gli altri e fu tratto dal santo Vangelio, ove Cristo disse a' suoi discepoli: Vos estis prior': Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Porta, bk VIII, chap. 79.

⁴ Maire Vigueur, *Italia comunale e signorile*.

political community'.⁵ The tripartition of the forms of government into monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, with the respective degenerations into tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy, are discussed by Plato (*Republic*, VII) and by Polybius (*Histories*, VI. 3–4), thereby becoming a topic of common discussion in humanist culture in the course of the thirteenth and then the fourteenth centuries.

In the name of the common good, the discussion was opened between republican and seignorial systems, a debate that reached its crucial moment at the end of the *Trecento*, when the most influential scholars of Florence and Venice began to address the emerging despotism imposed on Milan by the Visconti. The scholars involved in this dispute affirmed their own position as intellectuals by openly favouring one of the political systems, opposing the power of physical force with the power of the word. The Florentine intellectuals became promoters of republican diplomatic activity and propaganda, and they consolidated their political ideology on the basis of the traditional 'democratic' virtues of the urban merchant class. Even if not as active as the Florentines, the Venetian intellectuals ordered a program of political propaganda that promoted the constitution of the Republic of San Marco at the centre of the very ideal of republicanism. The supporters of the principality were less active than their antagonists, but they did not renounce participating in this passionate and intense political debate. In the writings of intellectuals such as Antonio Loschi (1365–1441), the ground is being prepared for an all-inclusive discussion about the various and best forms of government, which in the works of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) would later find its most complete and organic expression.⁶

The arguments of the two sides were simple and predictable: if, on the one hand, the supporters of the republics had liberty (understood in the dual sense of elective government and of independence from every foreign supremacy) at the centre of their argument; on the other hand, the supporters of the seignorial governments proposed themes of social peace (understood in the combined sense of order and unity). In both cases, it was expected to represent the supremacy of the law and to proclaim its culture as the fulcrum of their own civic values. In reality, the two systems of government were not so different: the republican forms of government completely ignored universal suffrage, and those supported by *signori* were not totalitarian governments, since in both

⁵ Aristotle, *La Politica*, ed. by Laurenti, bk III, para. 8, p. 85.

⁶ Jones, *Economia e società nell'Italia medievale*, pp. 503–26 (p. 505). On Antonio Loschi, see Baldassarri, *La vipera e il giglio*.

cases the power was always held by recurring oligarchic groups. The prevailing forms of persecution of those who opposed the system of government reveal just how little difference there was in the political identity of these two systems, both incapable of creating constructive dialogue with the respective internal opposition, whether ideological or economic.⁷

The multiplication of the trials of political exclusion advanced by the civic republics in the communal age and beyond reveals the incapacity to create real forms of apportioning public resources. The axiom according to which the free commune is the full expression of civic freedom and to which its crisis is caused by the degeneration of the factional struggle, together with the assumption that seignorial regimes marked the end of this freedom and open the way to the foreign invasions of the late *Quattrocento*, necessitate a progressive reconsideration. The commune and the *signoria* were not antithetical forms of government, and the latter did not represent either the inevitable result of the political crisis of the commune and of its freedoms nor did it constitute its negation. In both cases, the common good was always represented by the city in its entirety. Contemporaries, in fact, consistently made the common good gravitate around that which they defined as *regimen civitatis*: the governability of the city, at the centre of which there must constantly be the *civis*, which was a theme shared by forms of communal and seignorial governments. The commune and the *signoria* were therefore interchangeable political products from which to choose according to necessity and circumstance.

Naturally, the contemporary perceptions of the two forms of government diverged in terms of form but not substance. Communes and *signorie* were, in fact, described by contemporaries as different forms of government which, however, in substance were supported by oligarchical groups, a precise expression of economic power: on the one hand, the commune founded its credibility on the participation of the citizenry, on the elective principle, on the alternation of governors, and on public discussion; on the other hand, the seignorial regime was anchored on the solidity of monocracy.

The tendency for both of these political regimes was the achievement of the common good. At the moment in which civil society perceived the two forms as detached from reality and tending towards personal good, the political language was transformed. Thus, when the republican commune narrowed the channels of its own consensus to an increasingly smaller number of oligarchical groups, there arose the phenomenon of the progressive multiplication

⁷ Ricciardelli, 'Le modalità dell'esclusione politica'.

of conspiracies; while when the government of the *signore* became an authoritarian supremacy concentrated in the hands of a single individual, there was a tendency towards the development of discord among the subjects, of a system aimed at excluding them from gaining independent authority, and of inducing in them a servile disposition. If the common good was not pursued, political communication was no longer sufficient to control the *popolo*. Naturally, in both cases the citizens were well aware that they were not living in a political system that could be defined as democratic: the governments between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in fact, whether republican or seignorial, remained only theoretical models inasmuch as their leaders, in disregarding the promise of putting the citizens at the centre of power, were never representative of the entire society. However, no rulers were interested in transforming their authority into a tyranny, preferring to maintain a balance in the relationship between governors and the governed.

The centre of the question of the late communal age lay in the issue of governability. For this reason, since the end of the twelfth century, political vocabulary rediscovered, at first following Ciceronian rhetoric and then Aristotelian thought, forms of political communication at whose centre gravitated the same concepts of justice, liberty, and social peace. The governability was in the hands of the good governor who was required to show his political preparation, as demonstrated through his eloquence in public speaking, a necessary prerequisite for the pursuit of the common good and for governing the city to the good of its citizens. When the political regime, whether a republican or seignorial model, distanced itself from the civic community, the automatic result was the progressive growth of internal opposition: in either case, the resistance was against the politically despotic behaviour, which was not working toward the common good and which tended to guarantee its own interests and those of its political faction rather than the interests of the community as a whole.

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